

"A scholarly and timely study of the particular cause of religious liberty."—Allan W. Lee, D.D., general secretary, World Convention of Churches of Christ.

Bright Candle of Courage



Dr. Bert B. Beach



The place is Oxford, England. The date is October 16, 1555. "Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley stand back to back at a common stake, a chain about their waists. As the flames leap up, Latimer's voice rings out, 'Be of good comfort. . . . We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, . . . as I trust shall never be put out.' "

The candle of courage ignited by these and other defenders of religious liberty still burns today. But we can never forget that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

Author, international lecturer, and teacher Dr. Bert B. Beach looks at the historical beginnings of religious liberty, where we stand today on the key issues, and alerts us to the potential winds of strife that threaten to snuff out the candle of freedom.

"Interesting, engaging and thought-provoking . . . carefully researched and imaginatively written."—*The Rev. Canon Samuel Van Culin, secretary general, Anglican Consultative Council.*

"The reader will come away with a clearer understanding of the issues relating to this important topic. I can strongly commend it."—*Carl Mau, former general secretary, Lutheran World Federation.*

"A brilliant, insightful analysis for those who struggle with state/church concerns."—*Dr. Joe Hale, general secretary, World Methodist Council.*



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Dedication

To
Gianfranco Rossi
champion of religious liberty

and to
my associate directors in PARL
Gordon Engen
Roland Hegstad
Neville Matthews
Gary Ross
Mitchell Tyner

Contents

Preface

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Chapter 1:	Freedom of Religion and Belief: Some Basic Principles	11
Chapter 2:	What Religious Liberty Is and Is Not	17
Chapter 3:	The Magna Carta and Its Liberty Implications	26
Chapter 4:	Two Centuries of Constitutional Religious Liberty in the United States	33
Chapter 5:	George Washington, the Constitution, and Religious Liberty	42
Chapter 6:	The United Nations' Religious Liberty Declaration	52
Chapter 7:	The Responsibility of the Christian Church to Political Society	59
Chapter 8:	Religious Liberty, Vatican II, and the Catholic Church	73
Chapter 9:	United States' Diplomatic Relations With the Holy See	100
Chapter 10:	Can a University Be Christian and Free?	107
Chapter 11:	Persecution—Boon or Bane?	120

Preface

Few writers are as well qualified as Dr. B. B. Beach to write a book on various perspectives of religious liberty. First, he is a citizen of the world, educated as a youth in Switzerland and later at Pacific Union College and Stanford in California, and the Sorbonne in France. He has taught at schools and colleges in Italy, England, and the United States, and lectured in scores of countries on all continents. He speaks and writes fluently in half a dozen languages. For the past nine years he has served as Secretary-General of the International Religious Liberty Association and as Director of the Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. *Bright Candle of Courage* is the product of his experience in many nations, including those of eastern Europe and Africa.

The book is the product of a mature and balanced mind. It deserves wide readership, for religious liberty impinges upon every person of conscience.

Having read *Bright Candle of Courage*, the reader will shut it a richer man or woman.

Roland R. Hegstad, Editor
LIBERTY Magazine

Acknowledgments

There are many rivulets of influence that flow into making a book. Much reading, discussion, and practical experience have gone into this book. I am grateful to all these intellectual and pragmatic sources. I have appreciated the encouragement and support of my friends in the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions. A special thanks goes to Lynn Friday who has provided most competent help in preparing the manuscript for the publisher. Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to the American Religious Town Hall Meeting and its president, Pastor Robert Leiske, for urging me to write this book and supporting its diffusion through the weekly telecast.

Introduction

Why am I writing another book? Why a book on religious liberty? The French writer Gustave Flaubert once said that books are not made like children, but rather like pyramids, and they are just as useless. Flaubert's nineteenth-century contemporary, Benjamin Jowett, claimed that "one man is as good as another until he has written a book," but then he joins that select group of those who publish their mistakes!

Religious liberty is much in the news and its principles often misunderstood and not infrequently attacked. These principles need to be explained and defended. We are living in an age of human rights, but also in a time of climactic crisis. Never has there been so much liberty, especially in constitutional, legal, and international documents. Yet in most parts of the world, religious liberty is under attack by totalitarian politics or intolerant religious bigotry.

Free speech is closely related to the issue of religious liberty. Many who have problems with freedom of the press are also opposed to religious liberty. One of the first consequences of printing books from movable type was the arrival of the censor in Rome under Innocent VIII and his successor Alexander VI, with the inevitable restriction of religious freedom.

The German poet Heinrich Heine was right: "Wherever books are burned, men also in the end are burned."

Liberty and the growth of religious freedom have been an enduring theme of United States history. True, there are some dark spots in the American religious liberty record, but the trend has been toward greater tolerance, less discrimination, more respect, and greater pluralism. There are reasons for concern regarding the future, however. The extremes of doctrinaire fundamentalism and antireligious secularism could squeeze religious tolerance and pluralism right out of the fabric of American society—or of the world for that matter. In addition to shedding light on the past, and encouraging the lighting of candles of courage today, the other purpose of this book is to point the high beam of concern at potential future dangers.

The United States has in principle, if not always in practice, been "a nation with liberty for all." Could this liberty be lost? A non-Christian religious leader has openly referred to the United States as "The Great Satan." John the Revelator speaks about a political power that is transformed from lamb-like meekness to dragon-like haughtiness (Revelation 13:11-17). Could the United States at some future time remove its two pillars of civil and religious liberty and substitute a religio-political establishment for separation of church and state? There are some disquieting omens.

Finally, as the old Greek saying goes, books are medicine for the soul—hopefully of both the author and reader. Francis Bacon observed that some books are to be tasted and others to be chewed and digested. It is my fond hope that the latter case will be the reader's experience, for within the issues related to religious freedom, there is much food for thought.

B. B. Beach
Washington, D.C.

CHAPTER

One

Freedom of Religion and Belief: Some Basic Principles

Discussing the often volatile subject of religious liberty and church-state relations can be tricky—like trying to negotiate a circus high wire. It is easy to fall on one side or the other. However, there are some basic principles that will help maintain a balance—principles that are becoming more and more universally recognized.

The Universal Declaration

Religious liberty, together with freedom of belief, is one of the basic rights proclaimed in the epoch-making Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly. The right to freedom of religion and belief is formulated carefully, if not comprehensively, in article 18. It is of such fundamental importance that it bears repeating here:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to

manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

This right was reaffirmed and restated in article 18 of the "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights" voted in 1966 and transformed into a legal obligation for ratifying states beginning in 1976. As of now, most nations still haven't ratified this covenant, including, surprisingly enough, the United States. The Soviet Union has both signed and ratified; the U.S. has only signed.

The Right to Change Religion

The 1966 International Covenant differs from the 1948 formulation in one respect. The Universal Declaration includes the freedom to *change* religion or belief, while the covenant does not specifically mention the right to change. However, it does include the freedom "to adopt a religion or belief" of one's "choice." While this wording certainly implies the right to change, it does not actually use the term "change." Some Islamic states have been uncomfortable with the concept of a Muslim having the right to change his religion.

The 1981 Declaration

The third significant United Nations document affirming religious and ideological freedom is the 1981 "Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief." It actually took the United Nations twenty years to prepare and pass this document. However, it was finally accepted with no member nation dissenting or abstaining. (See chapter six for a discussion of this international declaration.)

A Recognized Universal Right

The concept of freedom of religion and belief now reflects a certain theoretical consensus that is deeply ingrained in the fabric of current law and international relations. Through the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, freedom of religion and belief has

become an aspect of human rights that has international meaning and diplomatic repercussions. Hardly was this the case prior to World War II.

While religious liberty is recognized more and more as a universal right, which no juridical system or cultural environment can simply ignore, many violations or curtailments of religious liberty are reported in most parts of the world. Actually, freedom of religion and belief should be *essentially* the same everywhere and should not be applied analogically. As Professor Adam Lopatka, first president of Poland's Supreme Court, has stated, it is essential for all nations to bring their national legislation into harmony with the 1981 U.N. Declaration (Minneapolis "Conference on Tolerance for Diversity of Religion or Belief," October 1986).

The Basis of Religious Liberty

The basis of religious liberty is not legislation; legislation simply recognizes this right. Neither is tolerance a suitable basis. Tolerance implies that freedom of religion and belief is not really an intrinsic right, but that society, in a spirit of beneficence, may grant a privilege to that which is not wholly approved of or possibly even suspect.

Religious liberty is based on the *dignity of the human person*. While this dignity is generally recognized, the nature of this dignity will depend on a person's or society's assumptions about mankind.

Equality and Non-Discrimination

Religious liberty is also based on two further fundamental assumptions: (1) the equality of all human beings and (2) the necessity of non-discrimination. Both these concepts now receive universal acknowledgment in theory, if not always in practice. Freedom of religion and belief declines as equality decreases and discrimination increases.

Equality of individual people naturally has as its corollary the civil equality of their religious beliefs and churches. No legal difference should be made between churches, denominations, or so-called sects. The varying sizes of churches do not

make it easy at times for authorities to practice evenhanded equality. Though some churches or religions want to be considered "more equal" than others, governments must be serious in carrying out any constitutional mandate to support religious liberty.

The Need for Church-State Separation¹

Full religious liberty, in my view, involves some form of separation of church and state and the rejection of established religion, for the state is not competent in spiritual matters and the churches' basic role is not really in the political arena. One may argue about the modality and extent of separation, but separation is good for both church and state. Unfortunately, in both the spiritual and political realms, some churches have historically tried to play a dominant role in society and public life. It is the duty of government to allow churches (and of course synagogues, mosques, and temples) and religions ample opportunity to fulfill their spiritual mission, but not to seek political power and control. Religions should not have hidden political agendas. This would be detrimental to both their integrity and credibility.

There is little doubt that religious liberty is best exercised within the setting of the secular state. This does not mean the state should be hostile or indifferent to religious bodies, but rather that it must exhibit what has been called a "benevolent neutrality." It is self-evident that church and state can never be completely separate. There are areas where responsibilities overlap and where activities of church and state need to meet in a positive way. While each needs to weed its own garden, there are areas of social activity where ongoing, sincere, fruitful cooperation between churches and government agencies can occur. Basic public morality, peace promotion, education, health, drug abuse, and the care of the handicapped are some key areas that immediately come to mind.

Right Not to Have a Religion

Freedom of religion also implies the right *not* to have or profess a religion. This is sometimes overlooked. It is a sad

commentary on religion that religionists, probably quite well-meaning at times, have throughout history tried to force fellow human beings into a required religious mold. Apart from the very wrong theological assumptions involved, this is a flagrant violation of the dignity of the human person. Coerced religion is demeaning and of little value.

It is vital to protect belief. When the belief of another person is threatened, even a belief that someone else would totally disagree with, potentially everyone's beliefs are in danger. When a state is arbitrarily selective in safeguarding freedom of belief, then all belief is potentially at risk. It does honor to any country when belief is juridically protected across the board and government discrimination in the area of belief is constitutionally impermissible and does not take place in practice.

Regulation of Religious Liberty

While freedom of religious or ideological *belief* must be absolute, the *practice* of religion and belief is subject to the equivalent rights of other people. No one has the right in the name of religion or belief to trample on the rights of his fellow human beings. These relationships need to be regulated by due process of law, not by arbitrary or discriminatory legal enactments. However, limitations of religious freedom are legitimate if clearly necessary to protect public safety, health, morality, and the fundamental rights of other people. In all this, the majority should show due respect for the rights of the minority.

Religious Liberty Rights

While freedoms of worship and liturgical expression are central ingredients of freedom of religion, they are only a part of the larger and more complex field of religious liberty. Freedom of religion includes the right to operate appropriate church institutions, such as schools, health-care centers, and publishing houses. It includes the right to solicit and receive voluntary financial contributions, observe ordinances or holy days in accordance with the precepts of one's religion, evangelize and propagate one's beliefs while respecting the beliefs

and integrity of others, and the right to maintain contact through communications and visits with fellow believers at national and international levels.

Religious Liberty Synthesis of Other Freedoms

Since religious liberty relates closely to, or even implies, such other liberties as freedom of thought, of association, of the press, and the right to decide one's own way of living, it may be viewed as a kind of synthesis of other freedoms—a right which undergirds and tests the status of *other human rights*.

The Golden Rule

Many of the principles we have mentioned are summarized in the concluding paragraph of the International Religious Liberty Association's Declaration of Principles: "We believe that the spirit of true religious liberty is epitomized in the Golden Rule—do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

1. See chapters two, four, and seven for additional aspects of church-state separation.

CHAPTER

Two

What Religious Liberty Is and Is Not

Not a few ideological pitfalls mark the road to religious liberty. Since most people want to travel this freeway, it is important to be acquainted with these faulty concepts, some of which could be real philosophical booby traps. Religious liberty, dealing as it does with such a basic, sacred human right, deserves an intellectual rather than a visceral approach.

It is imperative that anyone studying religious liberty avoid personal prejudice or preference, for erroneous concepts of this human right may spark opposition to the principle. To understand what religious liberty really is, I have found it helpful to know what it is not.

There are at least seven common fallacies about religious liberty, and their recognition will help us understand what religious liberty really is. All are influenced, to some degree, by the basic misunderstanding that religious liberty involves freedom from moral duties and liberates man from religious responsibility.

1. *Religious liberty is not freedom from God*, though this is exactly what many secularists and atheists mean when they

speak of religious liberty. In the nineteenth century, when political liberalism was in vogue—especially in Europe—the concept of religious liberty was not infrequently identified with secularism, agnosticism, free-thinking, and rejection of the idea of a transcendental God dominating mankind. According to this school of thought, the individual needs to be freed from the supposed tyranny of a man-created god. Religious liberty thus becomes freedom from dependence on, and obedience to, an exacting but “imaginary” supreme being.

Quite the contrary, religious liberty means religious independence from men in order to more effectively and freely allow for religious dependence upon God. It proposes freedom from intrusion by individuals and government in order to guarantee a person’s unfettered recognition of divine Lordship. This is in harmony with the biblical viewpoint: “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). The Christian believes that he has an inalienable moral duty toward a loving but sovereign God. Religious liberty allows the fulfillment of this duty, if so chosen.

2. *It is not freedom from men.* Some libertines would interpret religious liberty as total freedom from all outside control by family, school, government, and society, as if this liberty implied no obligation to the community or to society as a whole. Even in the delicate area of religious liberty, no responsible citizen advocates absolute freedom. The statement that “no man is an island” has not only poetic but practical significance. Indeed, we are all part of humanity’s main. “The truth is that we neither live nor die as self-contained units” (Romans 14:6, *The New Testament in Modern English*, J. B. Phillips, 1972). Moderating norms are necessary.

There are two aspects of religious liberty: (1) Freedom to believe and hold religious opinions and (2) freedom to act in accordance with one’s beliefs. Freedom of opinions, per se, is absolute because it has little, if any, social significance, but freedom to exteriorize beliefs into acts falls into the social context of conduct. Few would deny the right of public authorities to intervene in order to protect society against practices that endanger public morals or violate the rights of others. It is of

the essence of a country's greatness to make generous provision for the religious liberty rights of minorities. However, these rights do not exist in a social vacuum and cannot be properly implemented outside the framework of the right of the majority and the welfare of others. All honor to courts and government agencies able to achieve a dynamic balance between the rights and conscience of one and the rights and welfare of all.

3. *It is not freedom from self.* Some would interpret religious liberty as implying the individual's unconditional right to believe exactly as he chooses. While religious liberty involves the unqualified civil or legal right to believe according to personal predilection, it does not mean freedom from the essential moral obligation to obey one's conscience. Every person has a God-given responsibility to his or her human dignity and must therefore train the conscience to be upright. The Bible teaches that "anything which does not arise from conviction is sin" (Romans 14:23, NEB).

Using the constitutionally guaranteed right of freedom of conscience to violate this selfsame conscience is a serious abuse, not only of moral duty to self, but of a civil right. As Dr. Carrillo de Albornoz suggests, if society or government were able to prove bad faith, moral turpitude, and violation of conscience, the person in question could hardly claim the right to religious liberty in society. But, of course, this is not possible, and precisely for this reason liberty of conscience is so essential a human right. "Society cannot possibly allow its respect of religious freedom to depend on facts that it cannot investigate" (A. F. Carrillo de Albornoz, *The Basis of Religious Liberty*, p. 30). Only God knows the heart, and no human tribunal (civil or ecclesiastical) can judge conscience.

4. *It is not freedom from church.* Some mistaken individuals interpret religious liberty as meaning freedom from organized religion and independence from church authority. They assert that true religious liberty is really freedom to shake off the "yoke" of ecclesiastical control. Some favor this type of religious liberty as a means, not so much for exalting personal freedom of action, as for substituting the authority of the

state, hopefully benevolent, for the supposedly always oppressive power of the church.

There is, of course, abundant historical evidence pointing to abuses of ecclesiastical power. Clerical pressure, physical and psychological coercion, spiritual blackmail, emotional and moral arm-twisting, ecclesiastical sanctions, interdict, and secret delations (accusations) have enslaved the human spirit, corrupted the Christian ministry, and marred the image of the Christian church by persecuting millions. Coercion or inquisition have no place in a religious society. Yet, while man's response to the divine call and search for truth must be free, and every person has the right in the human context to refuse this call and decide against church membership, some form of church authority is necessary if there is to be an ecclesia uniting seekers of God. Some kind of internal church discipline is essential, but it should be a propelling authority of creative action based on constructive outlook rather than restrictive authority based on negative inlook.

5. *It is not freedom from state control*, although supporters of this concept of religious liberty advocate total independence from government. They see a massive wall separating the church from any state control and thus deny legitimate government authority. Paul in his epistle to the Romans makes it clear that existing authorities are instituted or ordered by God, and thus legal government is "divinely instituted." The state has rightful power, even in certain matters bearing upon the operation of the church. The state has the right and duty to promote the welfare of the people by upholding public order and safeguarding equal justice for all citizens.

True religious liberty requires that the state not interfere with the religious beliefs of its citizens, thus recognizing that there is a closed arena, which Albornoz calls "pure religious liberty" (*op. cit.*, p. 140), where the state is incompetent. On the other hand, there are areas where religious activities and state jurisdiction overlap. Separation of church and state must at times be an invulnerable wall, but on occasion it must be a permeable honeycomb allowing legitimate cooperation and even government regulation. Church activities often can

hardly be separated from rights or enterprises that fall under the regulatory powers of government. Think of church schools and state education laws, church construction and building codes, church financial operations and laws affecting financial transactions, church-operated health care institutions and health regulations, to name but a few spheres of joint influence where ironclad separation is out of the question.

In unfortunate instances, religious liberty has been used as a convenient cloak to camouflage the dagger of disloyalty and subversion and to cover up opposition to the legitimate authority of the state. Loyal citizenship is not in opposition to loyalty to God.

6. *It is not freedom for religious animosity and strife.* Not a few churchgoers attack, defame, and falsely accuse other religious confessions in the name of religious liberty. Religious liberty is the right to believe, preach, teach, propagate, and live one's beliefs free from outside coercion. It is not an excuse for mudslinging and irresponsibly attacking other churches or their adherents. It is not a weapon for religious wars of words or a warrant for division, vicious competition, and contention. It should not be misused as an arena for interconfessional combat. Use of false, self-seeking, or intimidating evangelistic avenues represents a corruption of legitimate witness and is nothing less than a *moral* abuse of religious liberty. On the contrary, religious liberty is the *sine qua non* for peaceful human and interchurch relations—the basis for communal and international harmony. On the other hand, most such conduct falls under the heading of moral obligation, and civil government is not competent to decide whether or not the witness of the church is proper, except as evangelistic methods violate nonreligious legal norms, such as laws governing libel or breaches of the peace.

7. *It is not freedom for indifference.* Supporters of this view tend to think that it really makes little difference what or if you believe. Religious beliefs are unimportant, they say; religious differences are irrelevant. Some opponents of religious liberty fear a mildew of religious unconcern. Of course, authentic religious liberty upholds the right of every person to

reject any or all religion. However, from a Christian theological perspective, the cardinal purpose of religious liberty is not to promote religious apathy or irreligion but to represent the most secure platform on which one may stand in individual and collective searches for religious identity and belonging.

What, then, is religious liberty?

In the New Testament several basic concepts of religious liberty emerge from the life of Christ. These are further developed theologically in the writings of the apostle Paul.

1. *Religious liberty respects the conscience of others.* The Greeks had a saying, "All is to the wise." This led to the privileged position, supported by philosophers, that if a man was right as a ruler, he had the prerogative to impose his views on his subjects. Paul objects to this concept in his first letter to the Corinthians (see 8:4-13) where he discusses the controversy over eating foods previously offered to idols. The majority said it was acceptable to eat the food, but a minority objected for reasons of conscience. Paul sides with the majority but says that while the conscience of the majority is, objectively speaking, correct, the church must take into account the conscience of the minority. The rights of even an unenlightened conscience must be protected and respected. The stronger is not to pass judgment upon the weaker, and no Christian is to be a stumbling block for another. Respect of others' opinions is even more imperative in today's pluralistic society.

2. *Religious liberty respects the transcendence, absoluteness, and sovereignty of God.* There is a danger here. Historians can point to the negative effect of monotheism on religious liberty, especially in the Hebrew-Christian-Islamic tradition. Leo Pfeffer says that "compulsion in religion is a heritage of the monotheistic worship which Moses commanded must, under penalty of death, be accorded to a jealous God" (Deuteronomy 13:6-9; Leviticus 24:16; 2 John 9-11. *Church, State and Freedom*, 1953, p. 6).

However, respect for the absolute and universal sovereignty of God leads to the conviction that God transcends man and is sovereign Lord of all. This being the case, it is outrageous for

man to claim to know all about the ways and intentions of God. Philip Wogaman puts it this way: "Latent beneath religious intolerance is the silent assumption of one's own absolute rightness. . . . If God is sovereign and transcendent, he is also to some extent hidden" (*Protestant Faith and Religious Liberty*, p. 95). Man needs the freedom to reach out toward the unfolding possibilities of truth, but "his finitude limits his ability to gain all the truth" (*ibid*, p. 101).

Theological conceptions of God are really only relative manifestations of God. They often point to God, but they are not God; God is absolute, but our understanding of God isn't. To use doctrines, creeds, or theological beliefs as a justification for religious oppression of people with different beliefs is absolutizing one view over another—a form of idolatry.

Respect for God's sovereignty places no limitations on God's communication to man through man. God's freedom to work through all persons and circumstances should not be frustrated by efforts to silence human beings of different religious persuasion. Religious liberty, then, deals not so much with the freedom of man as with the freedom of God to speak to and through all men. It is idolatrous to limit the manifestations of God to our own orthodox interpretation. "God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain" (William Cowper, *New Advent Hymnal*, No. 32).

Religious liberty, then, is not an act of charity toward our fellows, but an act of respect for the sovereignty of God.

3. *Religious liberty respects God's day of judgment.* In the Old Testament, God is presented as the Judge, the coming King, the Vindicator. "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense. . . . For the Lord shall judge his people" (Deuteronomy 32:35, 36). The Pauline writings show a great respect for God's day of judgment. Paul says, "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come" (1 Corinthians 4:5). For an individual to decide what beliefs are right or wrong, to act as inquisitor, to assume the right to be a judge of motives, is a usurpation of divine authority that belongs to God and will be exercised on the day of judgment. Is it not idolatry to make absolute claims of rightness and try to establish a doctrinal platform on which

to judge fellow human beings, thus providing a basis for religious persecution? A Roman Catholic theologian calls this attitude "eschatological impatience." Christians are invited to forgive others "seventy times seven," to love their enemies, not judge them. We are not qualified to judge. In the parable of the good wheat and the bad tares, the tares and wheat grow together until the day of harvest. Likewise in the church, the wheat and tares grow together. It is not the task of the church to destroy the tares; we must leave judgment to God alone.

4. *Religious liberty respects the separate functions of church and state.* As indicated earlier in this work, religious liberty embraces the manifestation of church-state separation. Here we get into a controversial area. The New Testament indicates that church and state have separate functions. But to say that there is *absolute* separation is something quite different. The climactic temptation of Jesus was Satan's offer to become a political Messiah, presupposing the union of church and state. The New Testament espouses the idea that there is not to be such a union. There are to be separate functions and respect for these different institutions, but it would be difficult to draw an unequivocal line and say, Here is the state, and there is the church, and never the twain shall meet.

There are two aspects of the state: its sinful predisposition, or the negative aspect; and the positive aspect, recognized as the minister of God for good. These two conflicting aspects are shown in Revelation 13 and Romans 13, respectively. The state exists essentially to promote the social and economic welfare of its citizenry, not their eternal salvation as such, but the framework in which they can endeavor to reach eternal salvation. The state does not preach. This function belongs to those who have "come out" and formed a separate kingdom and who are willing to lead others into that kingdom. Therefore, the state must be detached and impartial in questions of preaching. The New Testament shows distinctly the different purposes of Caesar's temporal kingdom and Christ's spiritual kingdom. (See John 18:36, 37; Matthew 22:21; Matthew 4:8-10; and Matthew 6:19, 20, 24, 33.) There should be respect for the separate functions and spheres of influence, but where to

draw the line is a complicated question. In some areas it is very clear that "this is the church." But other domains overlap to a degree that makes delineations difficult.

The concept of separate functions and spheres of influence is a distinctly New Testament contribution. All pre-Christian societies were sacral in nature and bound by the sacral ties of common religious and political loyalty. The New Testament envisions a revolutionary pluralistic society, but this balance is not always easy to maintain. There must be a form of separation of church and state, but exactly how this balance can be maintained is another question. The New Testament advocates "a free church in a free state." When this delicate balance is upheld, men can loyally render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar and render freely and lovingly unto God the things that belong to God.

CHAPTER

Three

The Magna Carta and Its Liberty Implications

In June 1215, the English barons forced King John to give his assent to a document—the Magna Carta—constituting a fundamental guarantee of rights and privileges. As the title of this chapter indicates, liberty in the Magna Carta is present more by *implication* and extension than by direct proclamation. There is no general statement that all men are to be free or born free, much less equal. There is not even an embryonic articulation of the later American or French natural rights and freedom conception. It is in no way an early manifesto of the rights of the working man; it is not a religious liberty declaration. It is a pragmatic document dealing with feudal rights and taxation, but great principles of law and freedom have been extrapolated from this document over many centuries. In the thinking of many, the Magna Carta is considered to be the progenitor of constitutional government and, in this sense, it has an ancestral relationship to the United States Constitution and its Bill of Rights.

Background

During the last part of the eleventh century, William the

Conqueror secured for himself and his early successors on the English throne a position of unprecedented power over land, barons, and the Church of Rome in England. Later successors had problems establishing their power, and there developed in the twelfth century a tradition of each new king enlarging his base of support by bolstering his coronation oath with written promises, called charters, sealed with the king's seal.

Furthermore, there was a trend toward agents of the crown growing stronger and the barons growing weaker in regard to two things: (1) financial liability of the barons to the crown and (2) judicial authority of feudal lords over their own people.

While Henry II (A.D. 1154-1189) was probably the greatest of England's medieval kings, his two sons were really failures as rulers. Richard I the Lionhearted gained a tremendous reputation as "the greatest chivalric warrior in Christendom," but he was misguided in government and unconvertant in the law. Furthermore, he spent almost all of his reign (last decade of the twelfth century) in various crusades or other adventures overseas. When he died in 1199, his brother John took over. He was potentially a good administrator but suffered probably from both paranoia and depression. He suspected all of treachery, was brutally cruel, greedy, self-indulgent, disloyal, and at times paralyzed by indecision and inaction. Maybe he was manic-depressive. Unfortunately, in those days they did not have psychiatrists.

During Richard's reign, taxes had greatly increased, due largely to the crusade costs, his ransom from captivity, and the war with France. Under John the situation got worse. He took as his queen a French girl already betrothed to a French nobleman. The latter appealed to King Philip Augustus of France, who was King John's overlord in regards to Normandy, Anjou, and Aquitaine. John simply ignored the summons of the French king and in 1204 was declared a contumacious vassal. John did nothing and lost about half his possessions!

His second defeat came from Pope Innocent III, who happened to be politically one of the strongest popes in history. An investiture quarrel had developed between John and Inno-

cent over the papal appointment of Stephen Langton as archbishop of Canterbury. John refused to recognize him. The pope responded by placing England under interdict (suspension of church services) from 1208-13, and in 1209, John was excommunicated. John confiscated a great part of the church's landed wealth. The pope then encouraged the King of France to invade England. Faced by baronial revolt, deposition, and invasion, John collapsed and abnegated himself before the pope. He accepted Langton as archbishop and even agreed to become the pope's vassal by making England the fief of the papacy. The pope now forbade the French king to invade England and, in fact, gave John full support, no matter how tyrannically he behaved, until the king's death. On the other hand, Archbishop Langton became a leader for the baronial rebels!

To make things even worse, regarding the prestige of the crown in England, in 1214, John was again humiliated in a war against his archenemy Philip Augustus of France.

The crown under John had now reached not only rock bottom but the breaking point. The barons were tired of paying aid, relief, wardship, scutage—in short paying increasing taxes—to a king who lost it all in disastrous and expensive ventures, with nothing to show. At least in the days of Richard there had been some glory!

Baronial Revolt

Finally, the barons revolted. It appears that a majority of the people sided with the majority of the barons against the king. This was the first full-fledged rebellion against the king since the Norman invasion. It was probably Archbishop Stephen Langton who gave the baronial movement identity and conscious aims. Their grievances were stipulated in the form of a "great charter." John had not issued a general charter at his coronation. There now developed a demand for such a solemn charter of liberties modeled on the coronation charter of Henry I.

On June 15, 1215, a dramatic event occurred at Runnymede, a little meadow on the Thames some twenty miles west from London and a couple of miles from Windsor Castle.

King John rode from the castle while the barons, bishops, and followers came by boat from London. A document of demands was made, and by the end of the week, the Magna Carta emerged with some sixty-three points.

The Magna Carta Itself

The Magna Carta itself is not an interesting document. It is not well-written. It is not systematic or organized. There are no sweeping generalizations regarding freedom of people.

It deals with immediate, specific problems and rights in which the nobility was interested. Most clauses deal with feudal dues (taxation), law courts, and administrative abuses (behavior of royal officials was to be controlled). There are some political clauses. The document closes with a form of security or guarantee that the king will obey the charter to which he has affixed his seal. Twenty-five noble guardians of the charter were appointed. They knew their king! Sure enough, soon after Runnymede, John repudiated the Magna Carta, claiming he had been under duress. He asked the pope, whose vassal he now was, to relieve him of his oath. The pope, trained at Bologna in Roman law, could not get excited about such an ephemeral thing as English common law. Furthermore, if the authority of the king were curbed, this could reflect negatively on papal authority in England. John was allowed to repudiate his oath.

The Magna Carta seemed dead. However, the barons invoked the security clause and proclaimed feudal rebellion. War began, but John died in 1216, after losing most of his baggage and treasure in the quicksand while carelessly taking a shortcut across an arm of the sea without due regard for the tide.

The regency of Henry III reissued the Magna Carta in 1216, with some omissions and changes. In 1225, at the majority of the king, the Magna Carta was reissued—now about a third shorter. Interestingly enough, it is the "Great Charter of 9 Henry III" that is the Magna Carta of English law and history and not the prototype of 1215. The Magna Carta expounded by Sir Edward Coke (d. 1634), the great

champion of English common law, is the 1225 document.

Significance of the Magna Carta

Scholars are divided regarding the exact nature of the Magna Carta. There has been a tendency over the centuries for the Magna Carta to grow in importance, until it reached the height of its prestige in the nineteenth century. Beginning with 1890 and Edward Jenks of Oxford and other scholars, there has been some revisionism and toning down of the Magna Carta's triumphant musical score. The grand opera has become for some an operetta!

There are really in practice, one might say, two Magna Cartas: (1) the haphazard expression of baronial grievances—the letter of the thirteenth century document and (2) an exalted, though ill-defined, symbolic charter of liberties—a timeless guarantee of liberty “to every being who breathes English air.” Or in the words of William Pitt the Elder: the “Bible of the Constitution.”

The first Magna Carta, emphasized by the historical revisionists, is seen mainly as a dated, selfish feudal document, with the barons only looking after their narrow interest. There is, of course, a lot of truth in this debunking view. True, in the thirteenth century, few people benefited from the Magna Carta. However, with the passing of time and the invocation of the Magna Carta with each conflict between king and baronage, and later between king and parliament or between the royal prerogative and the common law, the Magna Carta became an ever more exalted theoretical manifesto and symbol of liberty. As the centuries succeeded each other, “The Great charter was becoming a symbol, a battle cry against oppression, not a sober statement of the common law” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 14, 1970 edition, p. 579). It provided memorable phrases to be used in courts of law, in parliament, or in the church. When liberty was in danger, appeal was made to the Great Charter, the principal bulwark of English liberties!

The church was to be free and have the right of free election—freedom of religion. No free man was to be imprisoned

or outlawed except by lawful judgment of his peers or the law of the land—due process of law and a jury trial. No sheriff or royal officer was to take away any free man's house or carts or wood (to build a royal castle) without the owner's consent—property rights.

During the century of Tudor absolutism, the Magna Carta seemed almost forgotten. Thus in Shakespeare's day, it was not particularly popular or seen to be relevant. In his play, "King John" (ca. 1595), Shakespeare does not even mention the Magna Carta. However, just thirty years later, during the Civil War, when the Parliamentarians wanted to deal with the Stuart kings and their exalted divine-right concepts, the Magna Carta sprang into real prominence and has continued to be seen by most as a fundamental palladium of English liberty.

The lasting significance of the Magna Carta does not come from the Victorian view that it was a semi-sacred document, covered with veiled nobility and romance, and that it somehow accounted for the prosperity and virtue of the English, the supremacy of the royal navy, and for the great empire on which the sun never set! No, its significance lies rather in the fact that it was a first step toward constitutional government—a small step at Runnymede, but a giant step for constitutional rights. Bad King John (no other British king has ever had this name!) gave his assent to two basic principles: (1) Certain laws and customs are greater than the king himself. The ruler is responsible to law. The law is external to the king. The king and administrators operate the law, but the legal system is above them. To change the law, the ruler has to obtain the consent of the community. (2) If the ruler does not observe the laws, the people reserve the right to force him to do so.

Influence in America

The Magna Carta has had significant fallout in areas governed or influenced by the Anglo-American legal and political system, not from the language regarding feudal relationships and rights but from more general clauses in which future generations have seen their protection. For example, the

habeas corpus clause of the United States Constitution of 1787 goes back to clause 39 of the Magna Carta, and so do the due process clauses of the fifth and fourteenth amendments to the Constitution. The fundamental human rights embodied in the U.S. Constitution trace their ancestry to the Magna Carta of 1215/25. This explains why the American Bar Association has raised a monument at Runnymede in honor of the Magna Carta. In 1907, the "Magna Carta Day Association, International, Inc." was founded in the United States to emphasize the common political and legal heritage of the English-speaking peoples and their support of civil and religious liberty. The early colonies in America used words from the Magna Carta in their fundamental laws. In fact, George Washington called the U.S. Constitution "the Magna-Carta of our country." The Magna Carta has had its influence in the fundamental laws of various countries that belong to the (British) Commonwealth.

The great significance of the Magna Carta is not found in its individual clauses but in the circumstances and comprehensiveness of the grant, especially as seen and magnified by later generations. That is why June 15, 1215, and wicked King John are remembered, and the drama of that day has been impressed on the Anglo-Saxon psyche. As one who upholds the principles of liberty, I rank the Magna Carta among the most significant documents of history in man's continual struggle for freedom under law.

CHAPTER

Four

Two Centuries of Constitutional Religious Liberty in the United States

In 1986 North Americans lavishly celebrated the “Birthday of Miss Liberty.” But during 1987 they commemorated a more important birthday than that of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor—the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution. In this charter, the founders of this nation tried to raise a standard of liberty, justice, and balanced government. Did they succeed?

Guarantor of Liberties

Beginning in May 1787, some fifty-five men (only about forty were active) met in Philadelphia during the summer and produced the Constitution. This document, as amended in 1791, is the guarantor of United States liberties, including that most precious and fundamental of liberties—religious freedom. In fact, the Preamble to the Constitution states that its purpose is to “secure the blessings of liberty.”

A Great Document

By European standards, the United States of America is a comparatively new nation. Yet its written Constitution is the

world's oldest. William Gladstone, the eminent British statesmen, considered the U.S. Constitution "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man" (W. E. Gladstone, *Gleanings of Past Years, 1843-78*, vol. 1, 1879, p. 212). The Constitution has stood the test of time. It has remained largely unchanged. It has been amended twenty-six times, but the first ten amendments were really a part of the 1788 ratification process. Of the remaining sixteen amendments, some are mostly of a technical nature (e.g., the twenty-first cancelled the eighteenth). The thirteenth and fourteenth amendments are especially significant constitutionally.

The period of the *Articles of Confederation* had been chaotic. There were in effect thirteen independent states. In fact, it could be said that the independence of the states was not fully settled until the Civil War.

The background for the Constitutional Convention was rather inauspicious, its call irregular, and its purpose restricted to making some limited improvements in the *Articles of Confederation*. However, Providence must have been at work, for from that Philadelphian summer emerged a drastically different Constitution and totally new form of government.

Achievements

The Constitution represents several notable achievements.

1. It gives the Federal Government enough power to govern effectually but restrains the government from infringing on the rights and liberties of citizens. The *Articles of Confederation* served really independent states. In contrast, the Constitution provided for genuine union and nationhood.

2. The Constitution offers viable checks and balances of government power. Watergate and the more recent sale of arms to Iran reveal this system in operation. The framers did not fully trust government and rightly so. Theirs was a Judeo-Christian orientation that understood the sinful nature of man. This understanding stood in marked contrast, beginning two years later, to the French Revolution, which viewed man

far more optimistically, and resulted in terror and despotism. Reflecting the Puritan stand regarding human nature, the framers wanted to shut the door on sinful transgressors. Each branch of government was to check the potential excesses of the other branches, thus offsetting the natural egoism and greed of man (James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, I, p. 299).

3. The Constitution has revealed considerable flexibility, adaptability, and resilience. The commerce clause, for example, has allowed for the development of civil aviation. Though judicial review of state and federal statutes is not specifically provided for, the Constitution has made it possible. The same Constitution that served a relatively small country on the Atlantic seaboard with a few million inhabitants now serves a continental nation with worldwide, super-power responsibilities.

4. The emphasis on due process of law has been a boon to liberty. Of course, this has not always been perfectly applied. Discrimination in the form of slavery occurred for many decades, and, in other lesser guises, persists today. But due process was there, ultimately to prevail and even to be reinforced by several amendments to the Constitution.

5. The U.S. government is secular. No religious test may be applied to federal officeholding. That church and state are to be kept separate is clearly implied by the First Amendment. This has been of inestimable value to the nation and its citizens. It has also been a model for other nations, especially those in the Third World.

Colonial Experience

Church-state separation guarantees religious liberty in the United States. This relationship stems not only from the European background of religious intolerance, persecution, and the existence of established churches, but also from the colonial experience in America. Here, too, intolerance, discrimination, and even persecution had abounded. Artemus Ward stated perceptibly: "The Puritans nobly fled from a land of despotism to a land of freedom where they could not only enjoy their own

religion but could prevent everybody else from enjoying his."

Quakers and Baptists were persecuted, and so-called witches executed. There was discrimination against Catholics, except in Maryland, but there the Jews could not vote, and the penalty for blasphemy was a hole bored through the tongue. "Pope's day," with anti-Catholic demonstrations, was a yearly occasion in different places!

In the Massachusetts Bay Colony, dissenters had the "liberty" to leave and stay away. John Cotton, the most eminent New England divine, declared: "Toleration made the world anti-Christian." Christian truth was to be enforced by government. In Connecticut, during the first fifty years, only Congregationalists were allowed to live. The original constitution of the colony of New Haven (June 4, 1639) affirmed the rule of Scripture in civil government. Only Congregational Church members could be free burgesses, and only they could vote and hold office. The potential for religious intolerance was great, for established churches typified most of the colonies and in some cases continued well into the nineteenth century. We must deplore such lack of religious liberty.

Separation of Church and State

Gradually the religious liberty concept of separation took root. Roger Williams of Rhode Island had spoken of the need to insulate the garden of the church from the wilderness of the world. Of course, the state needed this same protection from the church.

Jefferson and Madison especially excelled at voicing the need for secular government and separation. Most of the constitutional fathers believed that religion (Christianity) was needed (spiritually and politically) to uphold public morality and underpin republican government, but they also concluded that government, especially the national/federal government, should be secular and separate from religion and churches. If true two hundred years ago in a mainly Protestant society (perhaps 75 percent of the population was then directly influenced by Puritanism), how much more important is this today in a pluralistic society where many millions of Jews,

Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Atheists, and many other religious and ideological minorities vie for attention.

Only Article VI, Sec. 3, mentions religion. It prohibits religious tests as a qualification for any office or public trust under the U.S. Constitution. Unlike many European and South American constitutions, the Constitution makes no reference to Christianity and does not even mention God. It is a secular constitution. There is an old anecdote about Alexander Hamilton, the first secretary of the treasury. A Princeton professor allegedly told him that the faculty was "greatly grieved that the Constitution has no recognition of God or the Christian religion." To which Hamilton is said to have replied: "I declare, we forgot it!" Of course, they did not just forget it. They wanted separation and religious liberty.

Early Meaning of Religious Clauses

What did the religious clauses of the First Amendment and Article VI mean at the time of the founding of the U.S.A.? Of course, we must be careful not to read our own modern ideas into the views of those assembled in Philadelphia over two hundred years ago. However, some concepts seem to be clear.

1. The framers of the Constitution wanted religious liberty. They believed that coerced religion impeded proper civil government and genuine religious faith.

2. They eschewed the establishment of particular denominations and also the establishment of Christianity or religion in general.

3. The religious clauses of the Constitution ("*Congress* shall make no law . . .") applied to the various branches of the federal government, but not to the states. For example, the Congregational Church continued for decades as the established church of Massachusetts (in fact, until 1833).

4. Apparently the framers anticipated circumspect cooperation between churches and the state. The same Congress that passed the First Amendment also enacted the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 that stated that "religion" was "necessary for good government" and should, together with morality, "be

encouraged" by the new territorial government. However, it seems clear there was to be "functional separation between church and state" (A. James Reichley, *Religion in American Public Life*, p. 113) but not secularistic hostility.

Supreme Court and First Amendment¹

During the first half-century after 1787, the U.S. Supreme Court devoted little attention to church-state relations. It held that the Bill of Rights, including, of course, the First Amendment, applied only to the federal government. Christianity, though not part of the Constitution, was seen as part of the moral fabric of common law inherited from Britain.

Before 1940 the Supreme Court rarely decided church-state issues. In 1940 the Supreme Court made an important and far-reaching decision: It applied the Bill of Rights to the states through the fourteenth amendment, which required of the states due process and equal protection of laws.

Since 1940 there have been several decisions giving more individual free-exercise-of-religion rights (not saluting the flag, selling religious literature from door to door without license, unemployment compensation, conscientious objection, etc.). Free exercise is given a wide berth as long as vital or compelling interests of the state are not affected, and of course there can be problems precisely in this area.

Well into this century, the Supreme Court did little to limit numerous government practices acknowledging the value of religion to the state and nation. More recently, state-mandated and -sponsored prayer in public schools and state aid to parochial schools have been denied and abortion has been legalized, with some restrictions.

In recent years the following Supreme Court tests have been applied regarding legislation with church-state implications:

Legislation should (1) have a secular purpose, (2) not have as its primary effect to advance or inhibit religion, (3) lead to no excessive church-state entanglement, (4) avoid political divisiveness along religious lines, and (5) limit free exercise

only when there is a compelling state interest and then only by using the least restrictive means.

More Judicial Conservatism

During the 1970s and the 1980s, the Supreme Court gave some indications of moving in a more conservative and less libertarian direction. There appears some inclination to swing back toward accommodation of establishment of religion but still far short of previous practices.

There has been the desire to appoint judges more favorable to government accommodation of religion and less favorable to individual rights, more favorable to anti-abortion (pro-life) and to the rights of the majority community. There is thus some reason for concern regarding the possible dismantling of some aspects of church-state separation. Opponents of separation are increasingly vocal and claim that separation was just Jefferson's idea. You can have establishment, they claim, and still have full religious liberty. They cite the examples of countries like Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany, and the Nordic countries. However, having lived in some of these countries, it is quite clear to me that the extensive religious liberty they have is not the same as in the United States. Minority churches or religions do not have rights equal to those of the established church; there is religious discrimination.

Other Religious Liberty Concerns

There are other concerns. Efforts are being made to tax churches. Tax exemption of church schools is being limited to those who conform to "public policy." There is a growing challenge to the right of churches and church institutions to hire exclusively members of their faith. Some anti-separationists have advocated taking away the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to review school prayer and abortion cases. There is a real danger that the constitutional foundation and balance of power between the branches of the United States government could be altered. On the other hand, excessive judicial activism can be a danger when it

tries to handle social problems difficult to solve by straightforward political action.

Christian Nation

The "Christian nation" concept is another problem. There are an increasing number of voices demanding that the United States be recognized as a "Christian nation." For example, at the January 1989 Arizona Republican Party State Convention, a controversial resolution was adopted stating that the United States "is a Christian nation" and the Constitution established "a republic based upon the absolute laws of the Bible, not a democracy" based upon the changing views of the people (*Washington Post*, March 14, 1989, p. A12).

There has been an absolutizing strain in North American history consisting of efforts to legislate sectarian morality and use official coercion to impose narrowly conceived formulations of moral views. Sunday blue laws are a long-standing case in point. Dire religious liberty consequences lurk about the tendency to see the United States as the first-fruits of the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. While most Americans are religious and the majority are at least formally Christians, the government and state are not constitutionally "Christian." In fact, the treaty with Tripoli (Barbary) to which George Washington affixed his signature in 1796 stated that "the government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian Religion" (Article XI).²

Thank God

There are problems on the religious liberty front. We have alluded to some; there are others. The price of freedom is "eternal vigilance." Nevertheless, believers can thank God for the bulwark of the Constitution. The overall trend since 1787 has been toward greater religious liberty. That the Constitution has permitted this and stood the test of historical development and changing times is part of its greatness.

George Washington's words at the Philadelphia Convention were indeed prophetic: "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and the honest can repair. The event is in the hand of God" (Max Farrand, *The Framing of the Constitution of the United States*, p. 66).

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1. See also Chapter 5, p. 46.
 2. See Chapter 5, p. 44.

CHAPTER

Five

George Washington, the Constitution, and Religious Liberty

George Washington was more a man of action than a man of theoretic thought. He had a practical education given him by pragmatic men that included outdoor occupations (farming, surveying, stock-raising, tobacco growing). He was not a man of books. He lacked much formal education in literature, foreign languages, and history. When we think of the Constitution, religious liberty, and early American political theory, we think of men like Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, and Paine. Because Washington's writings are much less extensive in theoretical and philosophical terms, his role is sometimes overlooked. His main impact and influence on religious liberty was through the direct force of his presence and personality rather than through intellectual exposition of religious, philosophical, and political ideas. However, he was wise enough to get help in his speeches from men like Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, Jonathan Trumbull, and David Humphries. The last two were rather religious men.

Religious Liberty During the Colonial Period

George Washington was, of course, influenced by the

colonial experience. It represented a sad story of intolerance. The weaknesses and abuses of Europe were transplanted to American soil. Many forms of European persecution were simply transferred to America.

In 1620, Puritan Pilgrims sought a place where they could live and worship by their own beliefs. However, these were to be defended with the full force of government. In the early years, church and town were virtually one, and only church members ("congregationalists") were allowed to vote. This applied also to Connecticut.

In Massachusetts, the first prosecution under a religious law took place in November 1630. John Baker was whipped "for shooting at fowl on the Sabbath day." The 1716 church attendance law permitted absence for only one month. A 1658 law dealt with the "cursed sect" of Quakers by imposing "banishment upon pain of death" (*American State Papers and Related Documents on Freedom in Religion*, William Addison Blakely, compiler, pp. 30, 34, 37, 38).

In Virginia a 1610 law required church attendance. The first transgression meant the loss of one week's allowance. The second transgression provided for the same punishment plus whipping. The penalty for the third transgression was death. The penalty for blasphemy was also death (*ibid.*, pp. 19, 20).

In Colonial times there were countless Lord's Day profanation acts and blue laws. The fines in Virginia were in pounds of tobacco and ten lashes on the bare back "well laid on."

Maryland had a comparatively good record in the early years. However, even the famous Toleration Act of 1649 provided toleration only for professed believers in Jesus Christ and the Trinity (*ibid.*, pp. 43, 44). Repressive legislation increased, especially after 1689 (Glorious Revolution). In 1692, the Church of England became the established church in Maryland.

Rhode Island had the best record, especially while Roger Williams, the founder, was still in charge.

During the Colonial period, Catholics, Quakers, Baptists, and Jews all had intolerance problems. At the time of the Revolution, Pennsylvania had the only Catholic Church outside

Maryland. There were at that time only 25,000 Catholics and 2,000 Jews in the Colonies, out of a population of some two and one-half million. Even George Washington experienced religious intolerance. In December 1789, after he had become president, Washington was on horseback and detained by the Connecticut tithing man for traveling on Sunday! The matter was settled when he promised to travel only as far as the town intended for attendance at a church service (*ibid*, p. 80).

President of the Constitutional Convention

During the Colonial period, religious persecution did not come, as it often does today, from the absolute, antireligious state, but from the establishment of a religious monopoly. It is this latter danger that George Washington and the founding fathers were trying to avoid. They recognized man's spiritual nature and his rights to hold religious belief.

The Articles of Confederation proved to be less than a success. There was practically no central government and, as a result, there was danger of total breakdown. On May 18, 1786, Washington declared: "Something must be done or the fabric must fall, for it is certainly tottering." He urged an "indissoluble union" with a strong central government.

He was one of the five delegates from Virginia to the 1787 Constitutional Convention. He was unanimously elected presiding officer. For four months he presided over the Constitutional Convention and broke silence only once on a minor matter of congressional apportionment. While he said little in debate, outside of the hall he insisted on stern, radical measures. He wrote: "My wish is, that the Convention may adopt no temporizing expedient, but probe the defects of the Constitution to the bottom, and provide radical cures," (in Richard B. Bernstein, *Are We to Be a Nation?*, p. 106).

He was an architect of consensus and tried to avoid divisive confrontations. He was able to keep Hamilton and Jefferson serving the new republic. He was important in leading the convention and holding it together through absolute integrity and singleness of purpose. He did what the nation expected of him: He stayed outside of details of debate and used his authority

sparingly but effectively. His weight of character did more than any other influence to bring the convention to agreement and obtain later ratification. His signature to the document was a guarantee to the American people. If he had opposed the Constitution, it would never have been accepted or ratified.

The central problem of the Constitutional Convention which Washington had to face was how to form a strong enough central government to meet its obligations and responsibilities and "preserve republican government" while at the same time respecting the liberties of the people. Washington favored strong central government, but he also had a strong belief in separation of powers. In fact, he felt the president should not influence laws passed by Congress! He also clearly stood for liberty. He wrote: "The establishment of Civil and Religious Liberty was the Motive which induced me to the field" (letter to the Reformed German Congregation, New York, November 27, 1783). He realized that civil and religious liberty must stand together. The conscience of the minority was to be respected as much as the conscience of the majority. The only restrictions were to be violation of civility, security, and public order, and encroachment upon the rights of others.

Need for a Bill of Rights

The Constitution of 1787 did not include a Bill of Rights. It did not explicitly provide for religious liberty and separation of church and state. Article VI, Section 3 was the only religious liberty statement, but a significant one. The language proposed by General Charles C. Pinckney, an Episcopalian, was: "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."

Actually, most members of the convention, including Washington, felt this was sufficient guarantee. Shortly after becoming president, he wrote to the Baptists of Virginia in May 1789: "If I could have entertained the slightest apprehension, that the Constitution framed in the convention, where I had the honor to preside, might possibly endanger the religious rights of any ecclesiastical society, certainly I would never have placed my signature to it; and if I could not conceive that

the general government might ever be so administered as to render the liberty of conscience insecure, I beg you will be persuaded, that no one would be more zealous than myself to establish effectual barriers against the horrors of spiritual tyranny, and every species of religious persecution."

Nevertheless, when the Constitution went to the states for ratification, some favored a more definite and specific expression and protection of religious liberty and other rights. The conventions of New York, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Virginia, North Carolina, and Rhode Island voiced specific fears and asked for a Bill of Rights to be included in the Constitution. So did Jefferson, who was in Paris as the American envoy, and thus did not participate in the Philadelphia Convention. He advocated ratification by nine states (so that the Constitution could start functioning) and the last four were to stay out until a Bill of Rights was annexed through amendment (letter to Colonel William Stephen Smith, February 2, 1788).

In fact, the Bill of Rights became the first ten amendments to the Constitution in 1791.

The First Amendment

Through the First Amendment, there is to be no establishment of religion, and free exercise of religion is guaranteed. We have here the foundation stone of the Bill of Rights: "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." All this means, as interpreted by the courts: (1) separation of church and state, (2) there is to be no official church, and (3) government is to be impartial and nondiscriminatory. There is here the basis for the fullest religious liberty.

Unfortunately, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights did not apply to the states. However, with the passing of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Supreme Court has now held that both the free exercise guarantee and the establishment clause apply to the states.

George Washington's Concept of Religious Liberty

While Washington is generally identified with independence and political liberty, he also promoted and encouraged religious

liberty, which he saw as of parallel importance (letter to two United Dutch Reformed Churches, November 10, 1783). First as commander in chief and later as president and as president of the Constitutional Convention, George Washington was vigilant in support of religious freedom and in avoidance of religious partiality. He demonstrated allegiance to a few fundamental principles rather than advocating a plethora of ideas. Among his basic concepts we can list the following:

1. *Religious liberty is a right.* He did not see religious liberty as simply a blessing or a gift from government or privilege to be conferred. He saw it as the "choicest" of "rights" (reply to Quakers' yearly meeting). It was not "by the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights" (to Newport Hebrew Congregation, August 17, 1790). President Washington called this policy "enlarged and liberal" and "worthy of imitation."

2. *Religious liberty does not mean opposition between church and state, but cooperation.* On one occasion he wrote: "While just government protects all in their religious rights, true religion affords to government its surest support" (reply to Synod of Dutch Reformed Church in North America, October 9, 1789—reply undated). He felt, as he expressed in his farewell address, that national morality could not prevail without religion, and religion prospered best when free from government interference, control, or establishment.

3. *There is a need for the greatest possible accommodation of conscience.* "Conscientious scruples of all men" are to "be treated with great delicacy and tenderness" and the law should always "be as extensively accommodated to them" as the essential interests of the nation allow (reply to Quakers' yearly meeting, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Western Maryland, Virginia, September 28, 1789—reply undated). Much earlier, in April 1751, he had written perceptibly to John Hanbury "that restraints on conscience are cruel, in regard to those on whom they are imposed, and injurious to the country imposing them" (quoted in Paul F. Boller, Jr., "George Washington and Religious Liberty," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, vol. XVII, No. 4, October 1960, p. 488).

4. *He stood for respect and impartiality in regard to all religions.* In contrast to John Adams, who was more the gadfly, Washington saw himself as a symbol for consensus of the nation, including religion. Various religious groups have, as a result, claimed the first president as their own!

He wanted reason to triumph over bigotry and superstition. He saw the United States as a land of "equal liberty," with the highest offices available to all (letter to New Church, Baltimore, January 27, 1793). Washington had considerable correspondence with religious bodies. In this, he shows equal respect and fairness for all faiths, including unpopular ones. For example, anti-Catholicism was active during the Revolutionary Period. "No popery" banners flew in New England. Tory Loyalists raised the specter of Catholic domination because of the French connection. In a letter to Colonel Benedict Arnold, in charge of the expedition to Canada, September 14, 1775, Washington wrote: "I also give it in charge to you to avoid all disrespect to or contempt of the religion of the country and its ceremonies. Prudence, policy, and a true Christian spirit, will lead us to look with compassion upon their errors without insulting them." Arnold was to "protect and support the free exercise of the religion" of Canada.

Anti-semitism was not a part of Washington's makeup. He made a statement to the Hebrew Congregation at Newport, August 17, 1790: "May the children of the stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants, while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid." In another letter, he wrote: "I shall always strive to prove a faithful and impartial patron of genuine vital religion" (to Methodist Bishop of New York, May 29, 1789).

5. *He believed religion and worship are a private matter between God and man.* Washington kept his own faith as a private matter. He believed that people "remain responsible only to their Maker for the religion, or modes of faith, which they may prefer to profess" (reply to Quakers' address of September 28, 1789).

To the Baptists in Virginia he wrote: "Every man being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience" (May 1, 1789).

Since religion and salvation were such personal matters, Washington believed that those who profess Christianity should be allowed to follow "that road to Heaven, which to them shall seem the most direct, plainest, easiest. . . ." (letter to Lafayette, August 15, 1787). This sounds very much like Frederick the Great who said that "everyone achieves heavenly bliss in his own way."

George Washington has been criticized for lack of formal religious belief. There is no doubt that he was a Christian, but he tended to be somewhat nondenominational and certainly not sectarian or bigoted. As "Father" of his country, he presumably did not wish to be identified closely with one religious current.

6. *He wanted to see peaceful interchurch relations and disliked interreligious strife.* He believed that the enlightened and liberal policies of his age should stop disputes and contentions, such as the Irish conflict (letter to Sir Edward Newenham, June 22, 1792). He felt that the dwelling together in charity and peace of various denominations distinguished the U.S. from all former ages or other nations (reply to Protestant Episcopal Church Convention, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, August 19, 1789). Harmony between the clergy was "the pride of our Country," he wrote (letter to clergy of various denominations around Philadelphia, March 3, 1797).

7. *Finally, Washington saw the right to religious liberty as involving responsibility.* Freedom of religion required the response of good citizenship and the support of one's country (reply to Hebrews of Newport, August 17, 1790). He disliked phony religiosity without worthy citizenship as its authentication (reply to Catholic Address, March 15, 1790). There is here, of course, a problem. What is "worthy citizenship?" The answer must, of course, be somewhat subjective. He saw responsible patriotic citizenship as dealing with acts, rather

than ideology. Writing to a Loyalist who was a distant relative, he said: "Actions, depending on ourselves, may be controlled, while the power of thinking originating in higher causes, cannot be molded to our desires" (letter to Bryan Fairfax, March 1, 1778).

Conclusion

George Washington saw Christianity as the moral backbone of the nation, but he did not see the United States as a "Christian nation" in a constitutional or legal sense. We have already referred to the treaty he signed with Tripoli (Barbary States) in 1796. There is an interesting phrase in Article XI of this treaty, which became part of the supreme law of the land: "As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility of Musselmen . . . it is declared by the parties, that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries" (William Addison Blakely, compiler, *American State Papers and Related Documents on Freedom in Religion*, pp. 311, 312).

In an October 1789 address to Washington, the ministers and elders of the first Presbytery of the Eastward (northeastern Massachusetts and New Hampshire) stated that they would have wished to see in the Constitution "some explicit acknowledgement of *the only* true God and Jesus Christ." In his tactful answer, Washington said that "the path of true piety is so plain as to require but little political direction." He further suggested that guidance in the area of religion is more properly to be committed to ministers of the gospel than to constitutional regulation (quoted in Boller, *op cit*, p. 501).

For Washington, the United States was a "nation of Christians," but not a "Christian nation," though he was not as strict a church-state separationist as Jefferson or Madison. Nevertheless, the American experience in religion and church-state relations is the reverse of politics: "Divided we stand, United we fall."

Religious liberty was not brought to America on the "May-

flower." It gradually sprang up in American soil. It germinated here, though fertilized by the thinking of the European Enlightenment. It has had an up-and-down history. There are still battles to be won. *But if it were not for the noble ideals of religious liberty espoused by the father of this country during the critical formative period of the nation, it is questionable whether there would be the Republic we know and love, guaranteeing religious liberty to every citizen.*

As long as the ideals and concepts advocated by this "citizen of the great republic of humanity at large" (letter to Lafayette, August 15, 1796) "hold a dominant place in the hearts of the American people, religious liberty will remain secure" (Blakely, *op cit.*, p. 176).

CHAPTER

Six

The United Nations' Religious Liberty Declaration

November 25, 1981, was a red-letter day in the annals of religious liberty history: The United Nations General Assembly finally voted the long-awaited declaration on religious liberty. The story of this document is one of over two decades of systematic obstruction, delaying tactics, lip service, and yet also valiant desire, supported by dogged determination to get approved as good and strong a statement as possible. Along the road there were many roadblocks. Even in the last stages of the debate, there were efforts that could have scuttled the declaration.

Intent of the Document

Some may have expected a more forceful and uncompromising statement. Is this consensus document a worthwhile declaration? In answering this question, we must briefly look at the origin and intent of the document.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948 with the understanding that eventually a specific "declaration" would be promulgated for each right, including religious liberty. The ultimate goal was the further step of

having each right the subject of a "Convention" (a binding treaty for each signatory state).

The declaration was originally aimed to combat religious persecution. With the passing of time, the scope of the declaration was enlarged to include the elimination of intolerance and discrimination in the setting of the wider concept of freedom of conscience, covering belief in general, be it religious or non-religious. Thus, the final document became a "Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief" (*Human Rights Sourcebook*, edited by Albert P. Blaustein et al., pp. 51-54).

Abandonment of Rigid Consensus

In March, 1981, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights took a major step forward and approved a draft declaration. In order to get the document voted, it was necessary to abandon the "consensus approach," which in practice allowed one or more delegations to "veto" or hamstring the proceedings. By no longer insisting on unanimity, the commission broke the U.N. religious liberty logjam.

The draft declaration then reached the thirty-sixth session of the yearly U.N. General Assembly. The crucial debate took place on the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee—the so-called "Third Committee." It was not a foregone conclusion that the declaration would be adopted, and there was, furthermore, the danger of its emasculation in order to get a consensus approval.

After considerable backstage consultations and maneuvering (some call it "shadowboxing"), the addition of a word here and dropping a word or phrase there, and thanks to the diplomatic efforts of the chairman of the Third Committee, the representative from Ireland (Declan O'Donovan), the declaration was approved without a vote—that is, by unanimous consent. Just over two weeks later, the full General Assembly gave its final blessing to the declaration, also without a vote. A twenty-year-old odyssey thus finally reached port. As the president of the General Assembly said, "This is an auspicious occasion."

What does the declaration advocate? It makes clear that

every person shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including the freedom to have a religion or whatever belief of his choice.

Every child shall enjoy the right to education in the matter of religion and shall not be compelled to receive religious or ideological teaching against the wishes of his parents.

Religious liberty is to include the freedom:

- to establish and maintain places of worship and assembly and appropriate charitable or humanitarian institutions;
- to publish and disseminate religious literature;
- to solicit and received voluntary financial contributions (offerings);
- to train and appoint church leaders;
- to observe days of rest and religious holidays as taught by one's religion or belief.

Right to Observance of Rest Day

The inclusion of "days of rest . . . in accordance with the precepts of one's religion" is a rather new and significant departure in internationally adopted sociopolitical documents. Previously only the International Bureau of Labor had adopted a document advocating a person's right to such days of rest. This aspect of the U.N. declaration will no doubt be especially welcomed by religious minorities who, like various Jewish groups, Seventh-day Adventists, and other Sabbatarians, have been subject to onerous discrimination as they have conscientiously tried to obey age-old religious convictions that place them out of step with a first-day-of-the-week-oriented society.

Muslim Opposition to Right to Change Religion

It should be noted that the final obstacle to unanimous approval of the declaration was the Muslim attitude toward the right to *adopt* or *change* religion. On the Third Committee, in order to placate the Muslim delegations, the phrase "including the right to choose, manifest and change one's religion or belief" was eliminated, and in two places the words "to adopt"

a religion were dropped. It seems that the Arabic translation of the declaration used for the word "adopt" the same expression for "change" that is condemned in the Koran. The supporters of the declaration were willing to compromise on this point because elsewhere in the text the right to change religion, although not specifically spelled out, is clearly implied when it says that everyone shall have the right "to have a religion or whatever belief *of his choice*." Furthermore, the Third Committee inserted an additional Article VIII in the text to counterbalance the above deletions. This new article says that "nothing in the present declaration shall be construed as restricting or derogating from any right defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." In these documents the right to adopt or change one's religion is clearly stated. Unfortunately, the covenants have so far been ratified by less than half the U.N. membership.

Some Caveats

As could be expected, this declaration, based as it is on a broad international consensus, has some limitations and certain weaknesses that could be open to abuse. Equal protection of all *religions* is not stated, but the enjoyment of *individual human rights* and fundamental freedoms "on an equal basis" is affirmed for all people.

The declaration says that the practices of religion are not to be injurious to a child's physical and mental health, and, furthermore, the child's "best interests" are to be the "guiding principle." But who decides what the "best interests" of the child are? the parents? the school authorities? social workers? government psychologists? political party officials? There is evidence that this question can be decided in a very arbitrary way, even to the extent of resorting to deprogramming and using mental hospitals when there are no genuine medical indications.

Article II reads that no one is to be "subject to discrimination by any . . . institution or group of persons or person on grounds of religion." Could these words be so broadly interpreted as to require parochial schools to admit students from

any religion and employ teachers of any or no religion or even hostile to the sponsoring church, despite the fact that the schools are operated and financed by the given church to educate its children or clergy? Such "nondiscrimination" could militate against free exercise of religion.

The teaching of religion or belief is said to be a right "in places suitable for these purposes." In certain countries, government officials consider only church structures as suitable premises for advocating religious beliefs, and therefore there could be no effective right to evangelize and disseminate beliefs outside recognized houses of worship and the inner family circle at home.

While the general right to maintain "appropriate charitable or humanitarian institutions" is supported, *schools* are not specifically mentioned. It does not take the prophetic gift to anticipate that a number of governments will continue, as they already have, to say that Christian or other parochial schools do not qualify as "appropriate institutions."

One would have liked to see clearly affirmed the right to international travel for the purpose of attending church meetings and conventions or making pilgrimages. Fortunately, the declaration does uphold the right to maintain "communications" with fellow believers at the "national and international levels." We can only hope that, increasingly, even governments or societies ideologically hostile to religion or to specific denominations will see travel as included in "communications" and as a fundamental human right not to be subject to discriminatory or xenophobic restrictions. There has been progress in this area; "glasnost" and "perestroika" are welcome signs on this freedom road.

National Legislation Should Be Brought Into Harmony With Declaration

While the declaration was adopted by unanimous vote (literally "without a vote"), several delegates in their "explanation after the vote" did express reservations that bear mentioning. The delegate of Iraq, speaking on behalf of the Islamic group, stated that while the acceptance of the declaration was

a worthy undertaking, the Muslim countries would have reservations regarding any statements that might be opposed to Islamic *shariya* and national law based on it. The delegate from Iran clearly stated that his government accepted the declaration only "insofar as it is in conformity with Islamic jurisprudence."

Some of the socialist countries voiced lukewarm support back in 1981. Several governments felt that the declaration was not balanced enough and gave a one-sided version of freedom of conscience that favored religion rather than atheistic beliefs. The Soviet Union expressed reservations regarding Article III, especially in regard to religious education, since Soviet legislation does not permit churches to operate regular schools. Currently, the Soviet Union is considering revising its legislation in regard to religion. Other delegates also indicated that their vote of approval was for the consensus approach or for the document as a whole but not for certain provisions that are not in harmony with the legislation of their country. However, Article VII specifically states that "the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration *shall be accorded in national legislation*" so that every citizen will enjoy these rights "in practice" (and not only in constitutional theory). Furthermore, Article IV states in unambiguous terms that all states are to "take effective measures" to eliminate discrimination based on religion or belief and "rescind legislation where necessary to prohibit such discrimination." Several socialist countries have indicated their desire to work toward this goal; this is encouraging news.

A Significant Religious Liberty Forward Step

Despite some of these shortcomings in the declaration, it must be viewed as a significant religious liberty advance. The member nations of the U.N. have approved an international statement of intent that holds high before the worldwide tribunal of the international community certain religious liberty aspirations and ideals of tolerance and nondiscrimination.

Governments or political parties that persecute or discriminate against religious believers or ideological dissenters will

find it increasingly difficult to justify or explain their oppressive laws or policies. It is true that the declaration is *not legally binding*, but the highest international political forum has given its stamp of approval to the concept of religious liberty. Since no U.N. member state refused its endorsement, any government flaunting disregard for the declaration and its provisions will have some "embarrassing explanations" to give.

The road ahead, when it comes to fuller compliance with the text, will not be easy. As in the past, the path will be uneven and at times uphill. Efforts are currently being made, supported by the Soviet Union, to draft a convention dealing with the subject matter of the declaration. This will be legally binding on the signatory nations. This will not be easy to achieve. In the meantime, the declaration is a first big step in the right direction.

Both religious believers and so-called nonbelievers have available an international instrument that will assist in molding public opinion and educating government authorities. It provides a helpful platform for the advocacy of religious freedom in an atmosphere of equality, nondiscrimination, peaceful relations, and justice.

CHAPTER

Seven

The Responsibility of the Christian Church to Political Society

Do Christians have a political role to play? Does the church have a political responsibility? Does separation of church and state mean that churches and their leaders have no sociopolitical responsibility? Just giving yes or no answers to such questions would be too simplistic—even misleading.

There are some who tend to think that the church has little, if any, social responsibility and certainly no political role to play. Others would insist that the church has incontestable political responsibilities and its main task is to improve the world and work toward creating a Christian social order that will ultimately result in the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. Between these two extreme views there runs a whole gamut of opinions.

Christ's Example

Christ's example is, of course, of prototypal importance to us. Jesus spoke very little in terms of a political society to which His followers should aspire. He did not claim to be a social reformer. He promoted no sociopolitical society to which

His followers should aspire. He formulated no sociopolitical platform on which the church could stand and conduct her program. He refused, for example, to be a judge in property disputes and controversies of this kind (see Luke 12:13, 14). The temptations of Jesus in the wilderness were, to some extent, political in nature. He had at least three opportunities to take over society's rule by a sort of *coup d'état*:

1. The feeding of the multitude in Galilee (see Luke 9:13-17).
2. His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (see Luke 19:30-44).
3. The experience with Peter's sword in the Garden of Gethsemane and available divine legions (see Matthew 26:51-53).

Jesus rejected crusadism and zealot-like kingship. He made it clear that His kingdom was not of this world.

Having said this, it is also true that the teachings of Jesus are bound to have a significant socioeconomic fallout. Luke 4:16-22 (quoting from Isaiah 61) presents the Messianic task as a social one (after all, good news has little meaning if it has no social dimension): good news to the poor, freedom for the captives, sight for the blind, liberty for the oppressed. Christ's life and ministry make it clear that these aspects of the Gospel should not be interpreted as referring exclusively to spiritual poverty, blindness, and oppression.

The concept that Jesus' teachings are irrelevant to the formulation of the social ethic because He expected the kingdom to come very soon is a questionable one. True, His teachings do not provide tailor-made ethical directives, but they do point in a direction, oriented toward love and reciprocal subordination. "Below all his teaching was the sympathy which identified Jesus with the unfortunate, the poor, and the oppressed" (Shailer Matthews, *Jesus on Social Institutions*, 1971 edition, p. 49).

Christ's social concern was unprecedented. Never was there another religious leader whose sympathies were so broad or so tender. He shared in all the experiences of humanity. As Jesus interpreted His Messianic mission through acts of love, so His

followers need today to "concentrate upon a life of goodness," performing deeds that are "profitable to men" (Titus 3:8, NEB and RSV). Salvation begins in the here and now. Christ came that men and women "might have life—life in all its fullness" (John 10:10, TEV). Living out this life includes dealing with social questions.

Throughout the centuries, faithful disciples of Jesus have felt a social responsibility resting on their Christian shoulders. This was true in New Testament times. It was the case in the nineteenth century, when the American revivalists preached the gospel of personal, inner salvation, but were also concerned about alcoholics, the poor, the unemployed, the slaves, the hunted Indians, children, and oppressed women.

Doctrine of Creation

Social responsibility is first of all based on the doctrine of creation. God, in His sovereign independence, willed to create *ex nihilo* a universe distinct from Himself. This creation was good, and God established man as the steward of this world.

Doctrine of Man

Social responsibility is also inherent in the doctrine of man. Man was created as a living soul by God's breathing life into plasmic dust.

The parameters of the church's social service responsibility lie within the biblical concept of the nature of man. Human beings are created in the image of God, but this image has been marred by sin. The subverted dignity of the child of God is restored through the process of salvation. Such an appreciation entails concrete ethical and social responsibility. The Christian concept that man is not flotsam on the sea of life nor a cog in the cosmic machine but a person with a potential for a radiant future gives purpose, direction, and energy to the Christian mission. Like Christ, the Christian must discern in every human being infinite possibilities.

Christianity is thus not a religion of isolated individualism or insulated introversion; it is a social religion. Christian virtues have social implications. Commitment to Jesus Christ

means commitment to the family of God (see 1 John 4:7, 8, 20). The Christian belongs to a community.

Dilemma of "Dual Citizenship"

It is precisely at this point that the Christian faces a dilemma: he has "dual citizenship." He belongs to the ecclesia and a nation, to the "new humanity" and the "old humanity," to the kingdom of God and to a political kingdom of this world. It is in this area of dual relationship that social responsibility can cause tension and lead to conflict between divine authority and earthly authorities. The double danger is, then, that Christians will either readapt Christianity as an escape or refuge religion surrounded by the moat of mystical conservatism or bring religion into line with government pressure and policy in such a way as to lead to Christianity's politicization (J. Ellul, "Social Change," *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, p. 631).

Soteriological Principle as Ultimate Purpose

While Christian social responsibility is based on the doctrines of creation and man, its teleology is provided by the soteriological principle. When the church and its members relate to the world, salvation as the ultimate purpose must predominate. Christian social responsibility is not simply the result of a humanitarian impulse, but it springs from a much more basic level. The Bible diagnoses the world's needs in terms of conversion, reconciliation, faith, and salvation.

Historical Trend Toward Church Political Involvement

The New Testament contains little instruction on how to deal with varying social and political structures. What the New Testament contains is not so much social or political doctrine as counsel regarding the individual behavior of Christians as citizens and exhortations to respect, obey, and pray for those in government authority. However, a millennium later—by the high Middle Ages—both clergy and laity felt that it was the responsibility of the Roman Catholic Church to lay down the rules for both politics and economics. By the Age of

Enlightenment (eighteenth century) the concept of separation of church and state began to assert itself. It was increasingly felt that the church had no jurisdiction or competence in so-called secular matters. From the late nineteenth century, the pendulum has gradually swung back toward greater church involvement in sociopolitical questions. Though old-time social gospel liberalism has largely been discredited in "mainline churches," there are some current aspects of this trend:

1. Secular ecumenism (unity of mankind in service to the world)
2. Theology of Hope
3. Theology of Liberation
4. Struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation

Danger Ahead

This greater church involvement in sociopolitical issues could prove to be a dangerous trend. It tends to eclipse the central salvific gospel in favor of the peripheral social or economic justice gospel. Salvation of men from sin is neglected, and salvation from the consequences of sin, such as hunger, racism, underdevelopment, and exploitation, is emphasized. J. B. Phillips has pointed out that in recent decades the center of faith for many Christians has become less God-oriented and "more earth-bound." Concern regarding the Christian attitude toward many social problems "is fine as far as it goes," but he suggests that "falling over backwards to disavow . . . otherworldliness" is unwarranted. In fact, "to have the soul firmly anchored in Heaven rather than grounded in this little sphere is far more like New Testament Christianity" (*New Testament Christianity* [1956], p. 49).

Having affirmed the importance of the otherworldly, salvific dimension, it must also be confessed that many Christians have turned a blind eye to the earthly realities of oppressive structures and acts supporting exploitation of workers, women and the weak, racism, and all kinds of discriminatory practices. On the contrary, the eschatological hope of the Christian should and must increase sensitivity to the crying

needs of suffering and hurting fellow human beings. Dealing now with these problems can be a witness to the New Earth when there will be "no more grief or crying or pain" (Revelation 21:4, TEV).

We should never forget that even if through some magical sociopolitical formula it were possible to create a utopian dream world where every man, woman, or child would be properly fed, comfortably housed, nicely clothed, well-educated, and suitably employed, what would it profit men to win the whole material world and lose their own souls? Even if by the wave of a magical wand, perfect sociopolitical structures could be created, it would take no time for sinful human beings to corrupt the system and turn utopia into a less-than-ideal structural reality.

Roots of "Kingdom of God on Earth" Concept

There are at least four political visions of society that have influenced Christians:

1. Political society is the collective force to practice that which is virtuous and good.
2. Politics is a cynical power struggle in the jungle of human rivalries.
3. Government is that power which arbitrates between various individual or special interests in order to work for the common good.
4. Politics represents socioeconomic class struggle and favors the dominant class.

Christian sociopolitical gospel activists generally wish to create the kingdom of God on earth by following more or less the first of these visions, already presented by Plato and more recently by Mao. The roots of this concept are not found in authentic Christianity but in the Constantinian union of church and state, humanistic utopianism, Darwinian social transformism, and the Marxist dream of a stateless and classless society. In the Gospels, the kingdom of God is not an earthly paradise built by men as instruments of the divine will. Jesus "was not seeking to establish the kingdom of God but to prepare men to enter it" (Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 60). The

kingdom is associated with divine judgment and the passing away, through divine intervention, of the present earth and its worldly kingdoms (see 2 Peter 3:10, 11). God's justice, not human justice, will be vindicated. Though there is already a lordship of Christ over the world, wrong conclusions are drawn from this lordship. Christ has overcome the world, and the final triumph of God's kingdom is assured. But Christ's present lordship in no way implies that Satan is no longer prince of this world and that the world has already been or is gradually being fully restored. Christ's lordship does not guarantee that mankind and its works are gradually giving fuller and fuller expression to this lordship. Christ's lordship over His church, however, does turn His people into a vivifying leaven permeating and modifying society.

Evangelism and Social Responsibility

In view of the current tendency toward church political involvement, one may ask, what is the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility? Actually, there is today a polarization regarding Christian mission. The traditional view equates mission with evangelism that is actual soul winning.

The biblical view of mission sees it as service in word and action. It is in this service concept that we find a synthesis of evangelism and social activity. John Stott has presented three ways of relating social outreach to evangelism:

1. Social action is a means of evangelism.
2. Social action is an aspect or part of evangelism.
3. Social action is a partner or a parallel activity to evangelism.

The third view seems to be the most correct. Both evangelistic and social service responsibility are needed. Though they support each other, they are separate aspects of mission. While evangelism must always be the overarching responsibility, the immediate priority may differ.

The Church's Responsibility in Relation to the World

What is the church's responsibility toward the world? In essence, it is to prepare men and women to meet their God. It is

to bring about conversions. Everything else is really secondary. This means:

Evangelism. This involves preaching the Gospel (see Mark 16:15, NEB), calling men to repentance, conversion, and salvation.

Exemplary existence. This means an exemplary lifestyle, existing as light and amid darkness (Philippians 2:15, NEB). God intends that His people shall be living examples of holiness that the world may be enlightened, convicted, or condemned, according as men treat the light given them.

Albert Camus, the French writer, expressed a key concept: "For a thought to change the world, it must first change the life of the man who carries it. It must become an example" (*Notebooks*, 1942-1951, V, p. 126). Preaching and existence go together, the first being the explanation of the second and the second the illustration of the first.

The example of the church as a community of believers is thus of paramount importance. The proclamation of the church becomes truly effective only insofar as it reflects a corresponding, homologous inner life. A church rent with racial squabbles or political party divisions has very little to say to the society that surrounds it.

Prayer. Intercession and supplication are more effective in producing change than are declarations, token financial grants, or resolutions. The prayers of the faithful rise much higher than sociopolitical statements and committee actions filling mountains of paper.

Christians Are Seed Planters

The perfection of the kingdom of God on earth is not possible this side of the Parousia. It is ruled out by sin. It does not belong to the twenty-first century (what an injustice to previous generations this would be!), but it belongs outside the current age. This does not mean that second advent-oriented Christians have no responsibility to endeavor to improve the world. On the contrary, Christian eschatology does not offer a utopian vision of millennial pie in the apocalyptic sky. Christians must be seed planters, not just sin plaintiffs. They are to

be instruments of God's redeeming power for good.

Although a just and peaceful society will never fully materialize prior to the second coming, it is the mission of the church to bear witness to and provide signs of the coming of such a truly revolutionary society by standing for justice, equality, brotherhood, and peace now. The apostle James says: "True justice is the harvest reaped by peacemakers from seeds sown in a spirit of peace" (James 3:18, NEB).

Secular Humanism Based on Ignorance of Human Nature

Evolutionary or revolutionary notions of creating "God's" kingdom (or really man's) gradually and kindly, or quickly through terror and force, are the product of either presumptuous spiritual pride or abysmal ignorance of human nature. It is here that all forms of humanism, at best, go up like a flashing rocket and then come down like a clay pigeon. Walter James says: "Having taken men to be entirely moulded by their social environment, they necessarily ignore the obvious possibility that men have built into them a will to exploit each other which is ineradicable however much the social circumstances may be altered. This is the enduring flaw which is so much part of the Christian understanding of man that from it the doctrines of the Redemption and Atonement have been raised" (*The Christian and Politics*, p. 61).

Ignoring this flaw is the irrationality of rationalism (in all its philosophical and political forms).

Politics—The Church's Archtemptation

In dealing with Christian responsibility for the welfare of people, we cannot escape the complex problem of politics.

In centuries gone by, the temptation often was to hitch politics to the religious wagon (and to the church). Today the contemporary temptation both in religious and political circles is to fasten religion (or the church) to the political wagon.

It is strange to hear some people criticize what they feel is too little church political action and advocate that churches become more involved in political activism. Throughout his-

tory, the very opposite has been the case, with churches brazenly and disastrously involved in political matters. Politics has probably been the cause of Christianity's greatest falls. More than a thousand years of church political intrusion, and, in a parallel fashion, state religious interference, produced a grotesque religiopolitical miscarriage resulting in shameful persecution.

For centuries the governments of Europe were completely in so-called Christian hands. There was little thought that the downtrodden poor should be lifted up and that society needed to be reformed. Society was static, and people were generally expected to stay put in the class and place in which they were born. Political society was seen by the church as an agency to help religion get people safely to heaven.

Separation of Church and State Endangered

With the coming of the Enlightenment, and Christian political involvement having failed so badly, a different goal was assigned to politics. John Locke explained the new secular understanding of politics and government this way: Political society is "to be directed to no other end but the peace, safety, and public good of the people" and the task of political power is to preserve "lives, liberties, and possessions" (*The Second Treatise of Government*, 1952, pp. 73, 97). Furthermore, with the wave of an evolutionary anthropological wand, man was pronounced "good" or, rather, heading toward becoming good. Today, even in theological quarters, the message of man's coming of age in potential goodness and dignity is being proclaimed.

The logical outcome of the new secular concept of government was separation of church and state. Today, however, there are two forces moving from opposite directions to squeeze church and state together again, with the church usually seen simply as being in the service of political society:

1. The totalitarian state, demanding complete allegiance and support from all citizens and sociological groupings.
2. Liberal or conservative churchmen and councils of churches reaching out for church involvement in social and

political change and advocating the use by churches of economic and political power as a weapon to achieve social changes they find desirable. From the religious liberty viewpoint, this is a dangerous trend. The church becomes simply another sociopolitical institution. The church can then hardly claim religious liberty, but at best human rights. Opponents of the church will claim—with some right—that they are not restricting the religious liberty of the church, but its antisocial influence.

“Christianity is a bastion of freedom only when it preaches that God’s Kingdom is not of this world” (James, *op. cit.*, p. 142). What would happen if Christians who push partisan moral legislation and advocate strong, specific church political involvement came to power? They would very likely demand absolute commitment to their policies. But sin would inevitably be mixed into their politics. It has been suggested that they might not bring back the Inquisition or go wandering off on crusades, but past experience regarding human nature would indicate that they would probably introduce something just as sinister.

Politics—The Art of Compromise

The dangers and temptations of political life are legion. There is always the danger of identifying religious aims with national aims. Christians can easily be deceived by Caesar. Christians and churches involved in politics may, of necessity, have to compromise and accept an expedient course which may not square with their best moral convictions. Their religion then suffers as a result. Success in politics involves compromise, exalting virtues, hiding vices, playing a part, and promoting self-advertisement.

Unforeseen Historical Outcomes

There is another problem that confronts the sociopolitical devotee. The outcome of certain policies is often quite different from what their proponents claimed or envisioned to begin with. The latter state of affairs is not infrequently worse than the former.

When churches or their leaders become tainted by the ironical quality of political activism, they downgrade the church to a mere social institution that operates seemingly as if there were no God involved in the affairs of men.

Christian Standards Unrealistic for General Political Arena

It seems to me quite unrealistic for churches to imagine that Christian standards, which are higher than those generally accepted by society, can be successfully applied to government and public affairs. A politician who overestimates (or perhaps underestimates) the moral capacity of the voters is in danger of committing political hara-kiri. Whoever enters the political market must be willing to use the common coin. Do you believe it is possible to apply the principles of the Sermon on the Mount in the general political arena? History indicates that never has a successful application of these teachings been made to society and life in general. Their application can only be made to a people chosen by God as His own. "Does anything in human experience," asks Walter James, "suggest that love may be institutionalized or legislated for?" (*op. cit.*, p. 188).

Christians—Salt and Light in Society

It would appear that politics can never be made truly Christian. Nevertheless, Christians must play some positive role in public affairs. They cannot just turn their backs on the world because of its sinfulness. Christians must endeavor, as salt and light, to permeate and influence non-Christian society in order to draw men to Christ. Christians have a social part to play. Often this will appear to be a Sisyphean labor, and the best Christian efforts will seem like those of a man bailing out a leaking boat. Christians must not, however, let the inevitable failures and sense of helplessness turn them into cynical, frustrated, or indifferent spectators of the sociopolitical scene. Neither must they fall into the quixotic pitfall of an evolutionary utopia, imagining

that merely human efforts will provide definitive panaceas.

Necessity of Circumspection in Speaking Out

The church must deal with moral principles, and these can leave a profound socioeconomic fallout. If the church feels she must on occasion speak out, even critically, regarding particular public affairs, she should do so only when:

1. Questions raised have clear moral answers.
2. The issues are incapable of receiving alternative Christian moral characterizations.
3. Basic personal rights make judgment necessary.
4. Religious liberty is at stake.
5. Salvation of souls is involved.
6. The church's pronouncements or involvement reflect united, thoughtful opinion of the membership (not bureaucratic, divisive party edicts).
7. The church's intervention could be expected to have positive results.

Church to Be the Church

The Christian church must never fall into the trap of identifying herself with one particular form of government or political system. The emphasis of the church must be on social service, rather than on social theory; on love rather than law; on liability more than legislation. The church must be the church. The most promising approach is to change society and improve the world by changing individuals. A change in the social climate is quickly reflected in the political life of society.

Apostolic Optimism

While there are opportunities for Christian witness in the political arena, it is certainly easy to exaggerate the possibilities open to Christian politicians. The task is formidable; it is difficult. The gospel is primarily to help mankind overcome its alienation from God, to show how life can be lived to its fullest, and to prepare men and women to meet their coming Lord. It challenges every child of God to feel a responsibility

for the welfare of fellow human beings. Christians can repeat St. Bernard of Cluny's old hymn:

The world is very evil;
The times are waxing late;
Be sober and keep vigil;
The Judge is at the gate.

(Albert Edward Bailey, *The Gospel in Hymns*, Scribner, 1950, p. 258.)

But genuine Christians are not social pessimists. They can also sing:

Christ is coming! let creation
Bid her groans and travail cease;
Let the glorious proclamation
Hope restore and faith increase.

(John R. MacDuff, *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., No. 201.)

The expectant Christian is buoyed up by apostolic eschatological optimism. He has social concern. This is the reason why he prays: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

CHAPTER

Eight

Religious Liberty, Vatican II, and the Catholic Church

For many centuries prior to the second Vatican Council, the religious liberty record of the Church of Rome left much to be desired. The time-honored view held by non-Catholics is that the papacy has been the enemy of freedom. To the Protestant onlooker it seems clear that authority has been abused, exterior freedom curtailed, and interior freedom inhibited. Even many Roman Catholics have considered their church as a sort of “holy tyrant.”

In the days of the Reformation, the immorality of the “scarlet woman” of Revelation 17 was greatly underlined. Today, after further centuries of papal evolution, the number one accusation heard most often is that Rome is a centralized, authoritarian, and imperial system of religious absolutism that crushes liberty within its own ranks and restricts, or at least constitutes, an ever-present threat to the liberty of others.

Some twenty years ago, I was involved in organizing an international religious liberty council in England. When some participants heard that a well-known Catholic bishop was going to be a speaker, they indicated that they planned to confront him regarding the Catholic religious liberty record.

However, in his opening remarks, the learned bishop himself referred to his church's rather dismal religious liberty history. This took the wind right out of the sails of his opposition. He then spoke about the changed situation that had resulted from the second Vatican Council. Indeed, Vatican II marks a significant watershed in Roman Catholic religious liberty history.

Undoubtedly it was with the above accusations in mind, with the historical evolution of human society toward democracy, with the universal recognition of human rights (including religious liberty), and with the development of ecumenism, that the second Vatican Council came to grips with the knotty issue of religious liberty.

Various Aspects of Catholic Restrictions

Until the days of Vatican II, Catholic bishops and the Curia were rather allergic to internal disagreement and objection. Criticism was quickly stifled and dissent dissipated. Bishops censured outspoken priests with hardly a word of public complaint. Catholic canon law put restrictions on Catholic scholars and writers; it still does. However, the 1983 revised Code of Canon Law represents a major change from the previous (1917) Code. The section which prohibited "publishing, reading, keeping, or selling certain large categories of religion-related writings" has been entirely eliminated, but the section on *prior censorship* of books has been kept "in a modified and attenuated form" (*The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, p. 578). Canon 823 states that bishops "have the duty and the right to demand that writings to be published by the Christian faithful which touch upon faith or morals be submitted to their judgment" (*ibid.*, p. 579).

Another aspect of internal restrictions on liberty was the procedure of *postcensorship* manifested in the *Index of Forbidden Books*, now happily abandoned. Some books had been banned simply because they were "offensive to pious ears" and, as a Roman Catholic historian says, "The ears of the pious are sometimes of asinine length" (H. P. R. Finberg, "Censorship," in *Objections to Roman Catholicism*, p. 95). As one looks at the names of authors whose works have been pro-

hibited, the list reads like a historical, literary, or scientific hall of fame.

The "Holy Office" Changes Name

Of a certain notoriety has been the *Holy Office*, which until Vatican II was the successor to the Inquisition. It has acted as prosecutor and judge in secret trials conducted according to secret procedures. Probably the most dramatic event of Vatican II was Cardinal Fring's solemn denunciation of the scandal-causing methods of the "Most Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office." Many Catholics acknowledge that Rome has smothered freedom of initiative within her own ranks. Scientific as well as theological thinking has been stifled and internal criticism silenced. Just think of Galileo, and in this century, Teilhard de Chardin, whose writings were not allowed to be published during his lifetime, and who as a result, has the martyr's aura surrounding his religioscientific writings.

Until recent times, the evidence for restrictions on external religious liberty within Catholicism was considerable. Repressive machinery was used and the "dissonant voice silenced [and this is a well-known British Catholic layperson speaking] by means of excommunications, sanctions, secret delations, clerical oaths, and circulated lists of suspect persons" (Magdalen Goffin, "Some Reflexions on Superstition and Credulity," in *Objections to Roman Catholicism*, pp. 43, 44). In the second century, Ignatius of Antioch said that if the church told him that what seemed white was actually black, he would pronounce it black. This may be the thing to do in some totalitarian states, but it is not religious liberty. It is servile toeing of the religious party line. In 1965, the Holy Office became the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. This new nomenclature certainly has a nicer ring to it. Fortunately, the revised procedures of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith give more rights to the accused.

Coercion Alien to Authentic Christianity

It is obviously easier to control in an autocracy than in a democracy, but coercion has no place in a religious society;

force should be alien to Christianity. To pen the faithful sheep within isolating ecclesiastical walls instead of leading them into the pastures of Christian freedom and feeding them on the Word of God, to censor instead of guide, to crush the heretic instead of proclaim the gospel, to invoke the aid of the secular arm—these actions may seem to be an easy way out. But this is hardly what the Lord Jesus Christ had in mind when He said, “Ye shall be witnesses unto me,” “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,” and “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

At the time of the second Vatican Council, there was a growing conviction in many Catholic circles that the atmosphere of liberty in belief, worship, and expressing one's religious convictions is the most auspicious milieu for the affirmation, growth, and diffusion of religious truth and organization. Man's response to the divine call must be free; his service should be unfettered. There is an important connection between man's God-given obligation to seek the truth and religious liberty, for the former of necessity entails the later. Since ecclesiastical authority is needed—and who would deny that some forms of internal church discipline are both legitimate and essential—it should be more a propelling authority of creative action based on a constructive outlook than simply a restrictive authority of safety measures based on a negative inlook.

Vatican II Recognizes Religious Liberty in Civil Society

In regard to religious liberty in civil society, the traditional Catholic *policy* has been that where they are in the minority, Catholics ask for religious liberty, and where they are in the majority, they deny the external manifestation of other beliefs. The traditional Catholic *doctrine* regarding religious liberty has been, and is, that while truth has rights, error has none. A kind of intellectual duplicity was promoted through the well-known theory of *thesis* (no religious liberty for those in “error”) and *hypothesis* (religious liberty can be granted non-Catholics provisionally where the common good makes it advisable, and the complete repression of erroneous beliefs is not practicable).

This two-faced theory put some strain on Catholic theologians and apologists by requiring them to operate in two separate worlds, so to speak—the often abstract world of thesis, principle, and theory, and the concrete world of hypothesis, practicality, exemptions, and application. It is specifically in order to get out of this two-world situation, and with the desire to be cleared of the accusation of insincerity toward religious liberty, that Vatican II put forward the hypothesis as thesis.

In reading the speeches made during the council debate, one cannot keep from recognizing an old psychological law: Repression is born of fear. It is quite obvious that those bishops who favored religious liberty (e.g. Americans and Germans) had little, if any, fear. On the other hand, the Spanish hierarchy, which took the lead in opposing full religious liberty, gave the impression of being fearful of what could happen in Spain if the small Protestant minority was given freedom.

By a decisive vote (1,954 in favor, out of 2,216 voting) the second Vatican Council gave approval on November 19, 1965, to the long-discussed Religious Liberty Declaration. The fact that 13.4 percent of the council fathers present held out and voted against approval (during this vote on the scheme as a whole) indicates what determination pervaded the hard core of Catholic antagonism to religious liberty.

This declaration was probably the most difficult document to process through the council. The original draft was revised thoroughly at least seven times. One of the champions of the text, the late American Jesuit John Courtney Murray, said that "blood, sweat and tears went into the preparation of the document." Who would have thought in September 1962 that it would take no less than four sessions and almost that many years to see religious liberty approved by the church. I remember speaking during those first council days to one of the most influential cardinals regarding the question of religious liberty. This archbishop said then that he was convinced that a good text was being prepared which would please Protestants, and he expected it to be approved well before Christmas (1962). Meeting this same cardinal in the council aula during

the very last week of the council (December 1965), I could not resist reminding his eminence of the conversation in the early days of Vatican II. The cardinal candidly admitted: "I would not have thought it would take so long to get the religious liberty text promulgated." However, he took consolation in the fact that as a result "we have a better text."

Recent Papal Positions

In order to better understand the new Catholic position regarding religious liberty, it would be well to examine briefly the teaching of the most recent Roman pontiffs. In fact, the declaration specifically states that it intends to develop their doctrine on this subject. Modern Catholic exponents of religious liberty like to go back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century and begin with Leo XIII. This is quite understandable, because it is more convenient to trace an evolution in the Catholic doctrine regarding religious freedom from Leo's "tolerance" to Paul's "liberty" and John Paul's freedom of conscience and religious liberty than to go back a few more years to Gregory XVI (1831-1846) and Pius IX (1846-1878). The latter considered liberty of conscience, in the sociopolitical setting of his time, to be "ravings" of a mad person.

Progressive Catholics today try to dismiss Pius's "Syllabus of Errors" by simply stating that it does not belong to the authentic deposit of the Catholic Church but represents only a polemical doctrine conditioned by the hostility of the anticlerical Piedmontese kingdom and Italian nationalism, which were trying to clip the papal state's political and territorial wings. As a result of the law of reaction, intransigent overcompensation took place in Pius's struggle against rising nineteenth-century nationalism, liberalism, and anticlerical secularism. However, the "Syllabus" has never been rejected, and mainstream Catholic theologians will say that it is real Catholic doctrine, "if rightly interpreted." Popes traditionally never reject or condemn the teachings of their predecessors. Later popes simply alter the decisions and pronouncements of former pontiffs by adding to and thus changing them. But they do not speak out against them.

The question of whether the "Syllabus" is real Catholic doctrine is of theoretical importance but somewhat beside the point in practical reality. The facts are that for decades the "Syllabus" was accepted as orthodox Catholic teaching and used, perhaps wrongly so, to justify restriction of human liberty and legitimize religious persecution.

The teaching of Leo XIII (1878-1903) is found in such encyclicals as *Immortale Dei*, *Libertas*, and *Diuturnum*. From these documents emerges a view of the paternal role of the state. Governments should never be "indifferent" regarding religions. The state must profess (with state acts of public worship), protect, and promote the Catholic religion. It is not licit for any government to put different religions on the same juridical footing as Catholicism. On the other hand, *wise tolerance* on a *de facto* basis of other churches is to be permitted "for grave reasons or to obtain good or to avoid evil. In the same way, the Church wants that absolutely nobody be forced to embrace the Catholic faith" (*Immortale Dei*). The principles of separation of church and state are reproved and taken to task. Only Catholics have the *duty and right* to follow their conscience in honoring God through external acts of worship. Other Christians have only the duty but *not the right*.

The Threat of Totalitarian Governments

Pius XI (1922-1939) felt it was his task to defend the Catholic Church and the absolute universal moral order it represents. His pontificate coincided with the rise of totalitarian governments of the Fascist, Nazi, or Stalinist type. In *Mit brennender Sorge* he affirmed that "man as a person possesses God-given rights which must be protected from every incursion of the community which has as its aim to deny them, abolish them or impede their exercise." It would thus appear that the threat to Roman Catholic freedom of action in certain countries (especially Nazi Germany) was a factor in arousing the Catholic religious liberty conscience.

Nevertheless, in *Non abbiamo bisogno* (1931), Pius XI condemned the expression "liberty of conscience" as equivocal and liable to be interpreted by some as synonymous with "absolute

independence of conscience," which he felt was "absurd for a soul created and redeemed by God." In this same encyclical, he interprets "liberty of conscience" as involving two rights: (1) procurement of maximum spiritual good under the teaching authority of Rome, (2) helping others to participate in redemption by collaborating with the Catholic hierarchy. It is evident that the right to religious liberty is used by Pius XI in a narrow sense and *only* when speaking about the Catholic Church.

With Pius XII (1939-1958) the emphasis was no longer on the paternal duty of the state to lead the citizens but on the basic importance of the *human person* as the significant unit of society. The foundation of social and moral life is not so much the state (as it was with Leo XIII) but rather the individual citizen as a human being (*Christmas radio message, 1944*).

In 1953 Pius XII made a significant speech to the fifth National Congress of Italian Jurists (December 6). Certain principles can be distilled from this address: (1) only Catholics *have* the right to religious liberty *as human beings* (natural law) *because* they have the *truth*. (2) Non-Catholics *may have* the right to religious liberty *as citizens* (and not because of their human nature) *because* of legal norms promoting the *common good*. (3) The state cannot give "positive authorization" to individuals or groups to teach erroneous religious doctrines. (4) It is not, on the other hand, the dutiful responsibility of government authorities *always* to suppress manifestations of error or evil. In other words, the repression of non-Catholic teachings must be subject to the "higher norm" of the greater, or common, good. Basically we are back to the late nineteenth-century papal position of "toleration."

Conscience and the Dignity of the Human Person

With John XXIII a real step forward was made in the direction of religious liberty. In *Pacem in Terris* John accepted the traditional concept of the "common good" but now affirmed that this is based on the rights and duties of the human person. He clearly supported the right of every individual to worship God privately and publicly according to the dictates of an *upright* conscience. The question remains, however, what is

an "upright" conscience? In the light of Vatican Council II, it would appear that the concept of the "upright" conscience applies to both those whose conscience is "true" and to those whose conscience is "invincibly erroneous." However, the Council Declaration "does not base the right to the free exercise of religion on 'freedom of conscience,' " but on the dignity of the human person (John Courtney Murray, "Notes on Declaration on Religious Freedom," *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M. Abbott, general editor, p. 679.)

Paul VI followed along the lines of John XXIII by agreeing that religious liberty is a fundamental right of the human person. While Catholics have the right to profess their religious beliefs, non-Catholics have the right not to be coerced to accept a religion in which they do not believe (*Christmas message 1964*). Furthermore, the common good requires civil equality for all citizens, independent of their beliefs or affiliations.

Vatican II Declaration Spells Out Present Doctrine

In reference to the evolution of papal teaching on the subject of religious liberty, what is the basic Catholic doctrine regarding religious liberty as enunciated by the Second Vatican Council? The Council Declaration rather sweepingly affirms "that the human person has a right to religious freedom" and that this right "is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed. Thus it is to become a civil right" (*The Documents of Vatican II*, pp. 678, 679). The subtitle of the declaration makes it clear that the religious liberty here discussed is *social and civil liberty* of individuals and communities in religious matters. It must be remembered that this is only one type of religious liberty (e.g., think of freedom of the act of faith, "liberty of the children of God," internal religious liberty within church organizations), albeit no doubt the most controversial, and this right of man to civil liberty in the religious domain is precisely what people generally refer to when they speak of "religious liberty." Thus, "religious liberty" has become a term with a special technical meaning.

Of what does this "right to religious freedom" consist? According to Vatican II, it means "*immunity from coercion* in civil

society." A person is not to be "forced to act in a manner contrary to his conscience." This is an absolute principle. Neither is an individual to "be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience" (*op. cit.*, p. 681). This is, however, not an absolute principle, for this right is limited by "public order."

The declaration does not go directly into the problem of the right to diffuse "erroneous" propaganda and beliefs. It simply deals with the organization of society and says that within this framework the human personality must be respected by (1) other individuals, (2) social groups, and (3) civil authority. To give a concrete example, it would appear that the doctrine of the declaration denies an employer the right to press his employees to change their religious views. Respect of the religious personality of the human person is not based just on tolerance or honor, but it is clearly presented as a *right*.

A Negative Right

So far so good, but the reader will readily notice that this right is really a *negative* right. It is *not the right to follow the dictates of conscience* nor the right to teach one's religious beliefs, no matter how "erroneous" these may objectively be. It is strictly the *right not to be coerced* by individuals, groups, or the state. Thus for the Second Vatican Council, religious liberty for all men is not *the right to profess* freely one's religion but rather immunity from coercion in religious matters. This is, of course, in theory not the same thing, though the practical fallout may not be so different.

By approaching religious liberty in this negative way, the council was trying, no doubt, to avoid an open clash with the traditional Catholic doctrine that, as a matter of principle, denied non-Catholics the right to profess freely their religious faith. It must be admitted that the officials of the Secretariat (now called Council) for the Promotion of Christian Unity were confronted with a most difficult task in trying to prepare a document favoring religious liberty, in view of past Roman Catholic teaching and practice. As Bishop Emile Desmet of Bruges (Belgium) admitted to me quite candidly, "The greatest obstacle in the way of the religious liberty Declaration was past

Catholic teaching." One has almost to admire the adroitness of the "negative formula" used to get the declaration past the swallowing Charybdis of traditional doctrine and the threatening Scylla of past Catholic intolerance.

Pattern of Inequality

In order to show continuity in Catholic doctrine concerning religious liberty and the "one true Church," and to achieve as complete a consensus as possible, the council found it necessary to make a distinction between the religious liberty of Roman Catholicism and that of other churches. Jesuit scholar John Courtney Murray states very clearly that the "Declaration does not in fact attribute the same liberty to the [Roman Catholic] Church and to other religious organizations, to which is extended the liberty of the human person" (John Courtney Murray, "Osservazioni Sulla Dichiarazione Della Liberta Religiosa," *La Civiltà Cattolica*, December 18, 1965, p. 544).

There are several points in the declaration that, when linked together, form a *pattern of inequality* between the Catholic church and other churches in regard to religious liberty. First of all, there is the affirmation that the Catholic Church is the "unique church of Christ," and therefore the "unique true religion" is found in Roman Catholicism. Second, as a consequence, Rome possesses a unique, special liberty that belongs only to her because her religious liberty as an institution is nothing less than the liberty of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. Third, the Catholic Church has the God-given task and positive right to proclaim and expound doctrinal truth through the authority of her teaching office. Fourth, Catholics "have the *right to live* in civil society according to the precepts of the Christian faith," not just the right to immunity from coercion. Fifth, everyone has, as a consequence of previous points, "the duty and therefore the right to seek truth in religious matters," that is, the duty and right to seek and accept the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, "teacher of truth." Sixth, it is claimed that the Catholic Church, as the infallible teacher of truth, has never and could never have failed to teach the right religious liberty doctrine,

though in the past Catholics have occasionally acted "less in accord with the spirit of the Gospel and even opposed to it."

It is a fact that the title "one true Church" can be used by all, and it cannot be copyrighted. Other churches make similar imperial and exclusionist claims. Furthermore, the claim that the Roman Catholic Church possesses the "unique true religion" is quite irrelevant to civil liberty in religious matters and thus does not fit in with a declaration regarding religious liberty in the *social* and *civil* spheres.

Exclusive Catholic Liberty

There are several observations that must be made regarding the special and exclusive kind of religious liberty Rome attributes to herself in addition to the freedom from coercion in religious matters that applies to all men and all churches.

First of all, regarding the *basis*, it is clear, as Murray points out, that the claimed foundation of the Catholic Church's religious liberty is theoretically poles apart from the foundation presented for the religious liberty of the human person. The Roman Catholic liberty, it is claimed, is supernatural, divine, and based on the Word of God as found through revelation. The liberty of the individual (and therefore also of the non-Catholic churches) is natural, human, and based on the dignity of the human person as found through reason.

Second, the declaration also discriminates regarding the *object* of religious liberty—that is, what is asked of the state and society as passive subjects. The required object of the peculiar freedom of the Roman Church is immunity from any restriction or pressure whatsoever on the part of every power within society and especially of governmental authority because to act against the liberty of Rome "is to act against the will of God." The object is thus *absolute* liberty, "that full measure of freedom" required by her role in the salvation of men. The requested object of religious liberty of the human person, on the other hand, is limited to freedom from coercion in public or private exercise of religion because to act against the liberty of the individual is to act against the dignity of the human person. This object, however, is not absolute, for the declaration

gives the state the right to restrict religious activities that violate public order.

From this follows a third disparity in that there is a lack of *equality in regard to limitations* between the religious liberty of the Catholic Church and that of other churches. This third inequality means that the Catholic Church asks for herself complete liberty and independence of action—that is, immunity from any limitations interfering with her ministerial functions and communal church life. Other churches (as are individuals) are clearly limited by public order. In other words, by virtue of her exclusive religious liberty, the Catholic Church claims for herself rights and privileges that she does not grant to other churches.

It would also appear that the declaration makes some room for a fourth difference: *juridical inequality* between Catholicism and other churches. While the declaration very fairly proclaims the juridical equality of Catholics and non-Catholics, it rejects the idea that the Catholic Church and other churches should enjoy a juridical equality before government authority corresponding to their equality before the bar of the individual conscience (see Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 539). There are some Catholic authorities who say that the religious liberty declaration “implies” the equality before the law of all religions. Maybe this legal equality of religions is “implied,” but it certainly is *not affirmed*, and, in fact, one wonders whether the contrary is not “implied” in one or two places.

The document clearly presents a fifth disparity: *inequality in regard to teaching beliefs*. Catholics have the right to teach their doctrines because they have the “truth.” While the declaration does not make as transparently evident the fact that this same right is not given to non-Catholics, because their doctrines contain “error,” this right to teach their beliefs is definitely omitted (*ibid*, p. 543).

In the declaration, the council declared that the Catholic Church has never failed in teaching the correct religious liberty doctrine that “no one is to be forced into faith.” It is quite true that Canon 1351 (1917 Code), stated that no one is to be forced to embrace the Catholic faith against his own will. The

council, however, admits that "in the life of the People of God . . . there have at times appeared ways of acting which were less in accord with the spirit of the gospel and even opposed to it" (*The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 692). Is this really all that needs to be said?

Even in this limited area, the Catholic Church "through the vicissitudes of human history" (*ibid.*) (to use the declaration terminology) has been inconsistent and on innumerable occasions has failed to uphold this doctrine, thus denying it *in practice* by permitting, advocating, promoting, and requiring coercion, torture, persecution, and execution of the most in-human kind.

Thomas Aquinas, the prince of Catholic theologians, taught that though indeed no one is to be forced into faith, one could and should force a baptized Catholic to follow the exigencies of baptism required by Catholic doctrine. He advocated the extermination of heresy by excommunicating heretics and putting them to death. As late as 1745, pope Benedict XIV abolished the right of a child placed in a convent by his parents at the age of, say, three or four years, to decide to leave the convent when he becomes of age (see Yves Congar, in *Informations Catholiques Internationales*, No. 250, October 15, 1965, p. 28).

Veiled euphemistic language cannot cover up offenses against the dignity and freedom of the human person. It is sophistry to say that it was the secular arm that shed the martyrs' blood. It is not an anachronistic attitude to deplore and condemn past persecutions simply because men are a product of their age. Are they not also the product of the teaching of their church?

The Protestant Record on Religious Liberty

On the other hand, the Protestant religious liberty record is certainly nothing to be proud of. Protestants have persecuted Catholics. In American history there has been in the past considerable anti-Catholicism. There have been anti-Catholic riots. In the middle of the last century, there was the "Know Nothing Party," which advocated the political proscription of

Catholics and had as its slogan opposition to "Wine, Rebellion, and Romanism." Suffice it to say that we deeply deplore Protestant transgressions against religious liberty. Protestants have, however, openly confessed past mistakes of their churches in this area. The Geneva descendants of the early followers of John Calvin erected a few years ago a monumental plaque in honor of Michael Servetus (burned at the stake at the instigation of Calvin, after he was apprehended in Geneva fleeing from the Catholic Inquisition), deploring the great Reformer's sad error.

The Council Declaration openly denounced transgressions by public authorities against religious liberty, but why the great reluctance to admit clearly deplorable facts of Catholic history? "History" and the dignity of the human person are to be satisfied with the smooth statement that "in the life of the People of God as it has made its pilgrim way through the vicissitudes of human history, there have at times appeared ways of acting which were less in accord with the spirit of the gospel and even opposed to it" (*The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 692).

Are Some Limitations Necessary?

Reference has already been made to the very delicate question of the *limitations of religious liberty*. This is the nerve center of the exercise of religious liberty. Some shortsighted "religious liberty libertines" notwithstanding, it is obvious that some limitations in the exercise of religious liberty are necessary. The Vatican Council Declaration uses the felicitous expression "moderating norms" (an earlier draft spoke of "limitative norms"). There are two aspects of religious liberty: (1) freedom to believe and hold religious *opinions* and (2) freedom to *act* in the framework of society according to the dictates of one's beliefs. Freedom of opinions, per se, is absolute because it has little if any social significance, but freedom to exteriorize beliefs into acts falls into the social context of conduct. Vatican II distinguishes between two limiting or moderating principles: (1) the moral norm and (2) the juridical norm. The moral principle is personal, and social responsibility is expressed through just and humane regard for others. The legal

standard is "public order." This distinction is significant and of the utmost importance, "for it would be fundamentally wrong and the origin of grave violations of the *legal and civil* religious freedom, to confuse the moral and the legal level and to think that, because this or that kind of activity is not entirely in consonance with some *moral* principles, the civil authority may repress it by coercive and legal means" (A. F. Carillo de Albornoz, "The Ecumenical and World Significance of the Vatican Declaration on Religious Liberty," *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, January, 1966, p. 70). We only wish that the declaration had always kept a clear separation between these two distinctions, but, as shall be seen shortly, when it comes to the question of what is commonly called "proselytism," these two limiting norms are dangerously mixed.

In discussing the crucial question of a legal standard for state interference, the declaration says: "Society has the right to defend itself against possible abuses committed on pretext of freedom of religion." This raises some difficult questions. What is an abuse? What are the legitimate limits of intervention by civil authorities where religious liberty is abused? There are no easy answers to these questions. The Council introduces the concept of "public order." According to Vatican II, the foundation of a government's right to intervene and moderate religious liberty is *not* the traditional theory previously held in Catholic ranks that the *government should suppress religious error* and moral evil because they are against the common good. Neither did the council accept the other popular Catholic view that the common good may require state intervention to restrict religious liberty (actually this was the view upheld in some earlier drafts of the declaration). Vatican II places the foundation for juridical limitation on public order (which is only the *necessary* part of the common good, the latter concept being a broader one which also includes that which is *useful*).

What Is "Public Order"?

As is well known, there is considerable elasticity in the concept of "public order." Its interpretation will greatly depend

upon the needs of a particular regime. The Vatican II Declaration therefore specifies three elements included in public order: (1) justice—the rights of others, (2) morality—public morality, (3) peace—public peace. It further states that legal restrictions of religious liberty to protect public order should not be enacted “in any arbitrary fashion or an unfair spirit of partisanship. Its action is to be controlled by juridical norms which are in conformity with objective moral order.”

Some commentators have severely condemned the use of “public order” as a legitimate factor limiting religious liberty. Despite the council definition given to “public order,” I agree that it is a term that has been and can be abusively interpreted. Dr. Gianfranco Rossi, secretary general of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty, has pointed out the interesting fact that the Italian Constitutional Assembly meeting in the same city of Rome almost twenty years before Vatican II specifically rejected “public order” as a factor limiting religious liberty because it was considered too dangerous a formula, rich in temptations for whoever has the power. The only limiting factor introduced in Article 19 of the Italian Constitution, which guarantees the right to profess one’s religious faith, is “public morality.” Most would agree that public morality, while it cannot be defined in a fixed way and varies with social development, is a criterion less subject to abuse than public order. Few people would deny that public authorities have the right to act against rites that endanger public morals.

The United States Supreme Court in *Reynolds vs. United States* (1879), dealing with the Mormon practice of polygamy, held that laws may interfere with religious practices, though not with mere belief. In *Cantrell vs. Connecticut* (1940), the Court held that conduct based on religious belief remains subject to regulation for the protection of society. It is on the basis of the *protection of society* that authorities have forbidden polygamy, the rites of the Russian sect preaching the sacrifice of Origen, and handling dangerous snakes as a form of worship, and courts have overruled parents who refuse to allow their children to receive blood transfusions and medical atten-

tion. No matter what formula is used, be it public order, public morality, breach of the peace, protection of society, or danger to life, it can always be abusively misapplied, though it would appear that public order is especially susceptible to misuse. However, the formulation used by Vatican II specifies that public order must not be interpreted in an arbitrary or discriminating manner. It thus appears as a desirable improvement on the much-abused expression "common good" introduced in early drafts of the declaration.

Declaration Vague on Right to Propagate Religion

Reference was made earlier to the moral and juridical norms accepted by the declaration as valid limiting principles moderating the exercise of religious liberty. The importance of making a clear distinction between these two norms was underlined. However, in section four, where the right of religious communities to spread their convictions is presented, or more accurately their *right not to be hindered* in witnessing publicly to their faith, the dividing line between moral imperative and legal restrictive norms is smudged. The council affirms that "in spreading religious faith and in introducing religious practices, everyone ought at all times to refrain from any manner of action which might seem to carry a hint of coercion or of a kind of persuasion that would be dishonorable [or dishonest] or unworthy, especially when dealing with poor or uneducated people. Such a manner of action would have to be considered an abuse of one's own right and a violation of the right of others" (*The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 682).

Here "proselytism," that is, "corrupt witness," is clearly condemned. Every Christian should agree to have a *moral obligation* to steer clear of any and all actions that smack of intimidation or border on the dishonest. Christians will condemn out of hand and freely avoid methods of evangelism that use unworthy avenues of persuasion. But to jump from this to the conclusion that all actions "which *might* seem to carry a *hint* of coercion or of a kind of persuasion that *would be dishonorable*" represent "a violation of the rights of others" and thus a transgression of the juridical norm which requires the state to inter-

vene repressively to protect "public order" (of which the "rights of others" is one of the three aspects), is a completely different matter. The declaration clearly states elsewhere that "the protection and promotion of the inviolable rights of man ranks among the essential duties of government" (*op. cit.*, p. 684). Are civil governments competent, and do they have the right to decide whether a church is using evangelistic methods that might possibly seem to "hint at coercion" or at "unworthy persuasion"? Are we not here opening widely a door to interference by governments in really religious matters? Honesty or dishonesty can be interpreted elastically and stretched until religious liberty breaks. Evangelism could be stopped or at least interfered with on trumped-up charges of using "dishonest" means. Should a legitimate case of dishonest propaganda by an individual be found, this could be used as an excuse to impede the public witness of a whole church.

State Establishment of Churches

The Vatican Council made the following statement regarding state or established churches: "If, in view of peculiar circumstances obtaining among certain peoples, special legal recognition is given in the constitutional order of society to one religious body, it is at the same time imperative that the right of all citizens and religious bodies to religious freedom should be recognized and made effective in practice" (*op. cit.*, p. 685).

I believe that the granting of special recognition to one church is wrought almost automatically with grave dangers for the enjoyment of full religious liberty, including complete civil and social equality, for other churches and their members. True, the Declaration does not advocate establishment, but neither does it advocate disestablishment.

The question that must be decided is whether establishment and special recognition are compatible with religious liberty and the sociocivil equality which the full exercise of this freedom requires. Can there be this full religious liberty when one church enjoys a special or "higher" juridical status than do the other churches? When one looks at the question on the practical level of experience, the answer must be No. Perhaps

on the theoretical level, one could imagine a "dream world" situation in which this might be possible. The main concern, however, is the world of existential realities. "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." It was this vigilant attitude that caused the founding fathers of the American Republic to reject religious establishment as potentially dangerous to liberty and to decide for separation of church and state as the best and surest way of safeguarding man's God-given right to religious liberty in society. Furthermore, church history seems to indicate with great clarity that "establishment" not only discriminates against the minority churches, but it also has an increasingly debilitating effect on the freedom, and a soporific influence on the evangelistic witness, of the "favored" church itself.

A church that humiliates itself by entrusting to the custody and defense of the state its witness to the "Lordship of Christ" is not only "compromising" with the state but also heavily mortgaging its own religious liberty and capacity for independent proclamation of the good news. The use of the "power apparatus" of the state may seem to bring the alpha of some immediate advantages to the church, but the omega of "leading strings" will sooner or later take restrictive hold and inevitably sound the death knell of ecclesiastical autonomy and toll the tidings of weakened religious liberty.

There can be little doubt that Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Liberty will go down in ecclesiastical history as a document of primordial significance. With this affirmation, the Church of Rome beholds the notion of a free human society inserted into Catholic theological thought. Civil religious liberty, already accepted previously in most contemporary national constitutions and proclaimed by the United Nations in 1948, appears to have become a part of Catholic teaching.

Some Obstacles Remain

Not all obstacles, however, have been removed. State financial support of Catholic schools is still indirectly but clearly advocated. Provision is made for an established state church, despite the dangers to religious liberty this situation entails.

The *positive right* to profess, teach, and propagate non-Catholic doctrines (so-called "error") is omitted from the declaration. The new Catholic religious liberty doctrine does *not* affirm the *right* of the individual *to choose* to believe and teach or not to believe and oppose certain religious opinions and practices but proclaims the dignity of the human person, which is to remain immune from outside intervention, provided "just public order" is not threatened.

One overriding fact stands forth: the Catholic Church has solemnly declared that individuals and churches are to be free from any form of external coercion. If words signify what they say, this can only mean that, at least for the present—and I wish I could say forever—the Catholic Church has turned her back on a heavy-laden past and has disavowed recourse to the secular arm and related methods of coercion and intimidation. In the final analysis, however, the litmus of the new Catholic view of religious liberty is not the Council Declaration itself but Vatican diplomacy, Catholic practice, and the enjoyment on the part of non-Catholics of complete religious liberty leading to civil and social equality in predominantly Catholic countries.

Changes Since Vatican II

In fact, since Vatican II, a number of significant changes have taken place in so-called Catholic countries. There is more religious liberty. The most dramatic change has been in Spain, where after long-lasting persecution of non-Catholics, such oppression has largely stopped. On a visit to Spain, Pope John Paul II addressed the leaders of Protestant churches, saying that he was aware that they had suffered a great deal in the past for their faith. He then gave thanks to God that the situation had changed.

In Italy, since 1985, the Catholic Church is no longer the state church, though it has kept some special privileges. Furthermore, the Italian government has signed and parliament has approved "agreements" ("*intesi*") with the Waldensians, Jews, Assemblies of God, and Seventh-day Adventists, granting them not only full legal recognition, but also ac-

knowledging specific religious liberty rights. The picture has also greatly improved in other Catholic countries.

Views of Pope John Paul II

In Pope John Paul II, no doubt influenced by his Polish background and experience, the Catholic Church has found a persuasive spokesman for human rights and religious liberty. Throughout his pontificate, he has frequently developed the theme of religious liberty before international organizations, diplomatic and political leaders, Catholic bishops, and in his more formal pronouncements, such as his first encyclical *Redemptor hominis* and the apostolic exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*. It is interesting to note that in his advocacy of religious liberty, John Paul II has gone beyond the negative formulation of Vatican II—freedom from constraints—to positive affirmation of religious liberty as the most fundamental of human rights. He's also affirmed the development of concrete content and conditions of this basic right.

In his 1988 World Day of Peace Message (8 December 1987), John Paul II highlighted religious liberty as a basic condition for world peace. Interestingly enough, this was the theme of the second World Religious Liberty Congress sponsored by the International Religious Liberty Association in 1984. The pope set forth religious freedom as "a cornerstone of the structure of human rights. . . . Beginning with the most private options, all individuals must be able to express themselves in an act of conscious choice, each following his or her own conscience. . . . The freedom of the individual in seeking the truth and in the corresponding profession of his or her religious convictions . . . must be recognized and confirmed by civil law as a personal and inalienable right. . . . The followers of the various religions should . . . express their convictions and organize their worship and all other specific activities with respect for the rights of those who do not belong to that religion or do not profess any creed" (pp. 3, 5, 6, 12, Libreria Editrice Vaticana).

A year later, in his "Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace 1 January 1889," Pope John Paul II emphasized the need to "respect minorities." In this context, he

made a specific call for religious liberty: "Religious minorities must be able to worship as a community, according to their own rites. They must also be in a position to provide religious education through appropriate teaching programmes." Furthermore, government authorities should ensure religious freedom "especially when, alongside the great majority who follow one religion, there exist one or more minority groups of another faith" (p. 8, Libreria Editrice Vaticana).

Practical Requirement for Achieving Religious Liberty

In connection with the Madrid Conference on European Security and Cooperation (1980), Pope John Paul II had the Holy See present a list of elements considered necessary in order to achieve full religious liberty at all levels:

At the personal level, the following have to be taken into account:

- freedom to hold or not to hold a particular faith and to join the corresponding confessional community;
- freedom to perform acts of prayer and worship, individually and collectively, in private or in public, and to have churches or places of worship according to the needs of the believers;
- freedom for parents to educate their children in the religious convictions that inspire their own life, and to have them attend religious instruction as provided by their faith community;
- freedom for families to choose the schools or other means which provide this sort of education for their children, without having to sustain directly or indirectly extra charges which would in fact deny them this freedom;
- freedom for individuals to receive religious assistance wherever they are, especially in public health institutions, in military establishments, during compulsory public service, and in places of detention;
- freedom at personal, civic, or social levels, from any form of coercion to perform acts contrary to one's faith or to receive an education or to join groups or associations with principles opposed to one's religious convictions;

- freedom not to be subjected, on religious grounds, to forms of restriction and discrimination, in relation to one's fellow citizens, in all aspects of life (one's career, including study, employment, or profession; one's participation in civic and social responsibilities; etc.).

At the community level, account has to be taken of the fact that religious denominations, in bringing together believers of a given faith, exist and act as social bodies organized according to their own doctrinal principles and institutional purposes.

The church as such and confessional communities in general need to enjoy specific liberties in order to conduct their life and to pursue their purposes. Among such liberties the following are to be mentioned especially:

- freedom to have their own internal hierarchy or equivalent ministers freely established by the communities according to their constitutional norms;

- freedom for religious authorities to exercise their ministry freely, ordain priests or ministers, appoint to ecclesiastical offices, communicate and have contacts with those belonging to their religious denomination;

- freedom to have their own institutions for religious training and theological studies, where candidates for ministry, priesthood, and religious consecration can be freely admitted;

- freedom to receive and publish religious books related to faith and worship and to have free use of them;

- freedom to proclaim and communicate the teaching of the faith, whether by the spoken or the written word, inside as well as outside places of worship, and to make known their moral teaching on human activities and on the organization of society;

- freedom to use the media of social communication (press, radio, television) for the same purpose;

- freedom to carry out educational, charitable, and social activities so as to put into practice the religious precepts.

At the international level, the following requirements have to be respected:

With regard to religious communities which have a su-

preme authority responsible at world level, in line with the directives of their faith, for the unity of communion that binds together all ministers and believers in the same confession:

- freedom to maintain mutual relations of communication between that authority and the local ministers and religious communities;

- freedom to make known the documents and texts of the religious world authorities;

- freedom to exchange freely in the field of communication, cooperation, religious solidarity, and more particularly, the freedom and possibility of holding multinational or international meetings;

- freedom for religious communities to exchange information and other contributions of a theological or religious nature;

- the possibility for the institutions that are by their very nature at the service of religion to contribute to the discussion and definition of national laws and international instruments that endeavor to express the exact tenor of the exercise of religious freedom.

The above list is a very comprehensive statement of requirements for full religious liberty. I would make three additions: separation of church and state, the right to observe days of rest in accordance with one's religious beliefs, and the right to conscientious objection. I would also make one subtraction: as an American church-state separationist, I do not believe in state subsidies to church schools and therefore find it right that parents "sustain . . . extra charges" when sending their children to church schools. My grandparents did, my parents did, and so have I and my wife, willingly. This is part of the price for the enjoyment of precious religious liberty.

Permanency of Religious Liberty

There is a final question that presents itself. How permanent is the new religious liberty teaching? Is it only of contingent character, or is it definitive? Does it represent only a juridical and historical response to contemporary conditions and pressures, or does it represent unconditional doctrinal

truth, which once acquired cannot be abandoned? Only the future holds the final answer to these questions.

Can the religious liberty clock ever be put back again? We are told that the Catholic Church today is not dealing with the same "reality" as in the nineteenth century. The state and the significance of the common good (now worldwide instead of statewide) have changed. Then the danger was religious indifference and rising liberalism; today there is the danger of the totalitarian state, and the emphasis is on the rights of man existing concretely in society. The different aspects of a new situation have given rise to a *new doctrinal synthesis*.

Can the Pendulum Swing Back?

What would happen if the Catholic Church, or the world in general, found itself faced with a new "reality" and another change in the significance of the common good in the future? What would happen if, in a time of international crisis and hysterical rumors and accusations, public opinion shifted against religious liberty? Since the present position favoring religious liberty is considered by the Catholic Church as being consistent with its past position denouncing religious liberty "as supremely destructive for the salvation of souls" (*Quanta Cura*), non-Catholics would seem justified in wondering whether Catholic "consistency" would permit another swing of the pendulum back to the hostile view, should future conditions make such a stand seem opportune.

It must not be forgotten; religious liberty is still not dogmatically defined in the Catholic Church. Theoretically, of course, in the same way the present doctrine betokens a development of the past doctrine, so future developments could readily lead to another "progress of thought" and a new doctrine. In precisely what direction this "progress of thought" will lead is hard to ascertain from the rapidly changing present historical situation.

Cardinal Pavan, one of the leading authors of the religious liberty declaration, makes this implied prognosis: "Reasonable doubt concerning the irreversibility of the process through which the human family has reached the definition of this

right [to civil religious liberty] cannot be raised" (Pietro Pavan, *Liberta Religiosa e Pubblici Poteri*, p. 7). Some years ago, while in Rome, I had lunch with a cardinal who had served as the secretary of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (the former Inquisition until this century). I asked him whether there could be a future abandonment of religious liberty for all. His answer was: "The change is irreversible." That was his clear conviction. We concur with the thought that the old church cannot be put back together in the old pre-Vatican II way. This does not mean, however, that the authoritarian, absolutist undercurrent of Catholicism will not at some time in the future rise once again to the surface. Even Father John Courtney Murray admitted that at some future date Catholics may possibly lose the truth of religious liberty.

John the Revelator in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation is given a vision of the forces of religious apostasy and persecution at work in the climactic period of this world's history. Medieval intolerance arises again and culminates in a worldwide decree of economic ostracism allowing only those who belong to and have the "mark" of the religiopolitical establishment to buy or sell. As John says, "Understanding is needed here," (Revelation 13:18, Phillips) and the only two lamps we have to guide our feet are the prophetic Word of God and past experience.

CHAPTER

Nine

United States' Diplomatic Relations With the Holy See

In 1984, the United States joined over one hundred other countries by establishing diplomatic relations with the Holy See.

A Surprise Move

A little historical background may aid understanding these recent developments. In a surprise move, on September 22, 1983, the Senate, by voice vote, approved an amendment to the State Department Authorization Bill lifting the 1867 prohibition against expenditure of government funds to support diplomatic relations with the Holy See. This amendment prevailed in conference and on November 22 became law.

Actually, the action of Congress represented much more than the simple removal of a 116-year-old stricture, for it openly stated that its purpose was "to provide for the establishment of United States diplomatic relations with the Vatican." This radical change in longstanding national policy was accomplished without public discussion or hearings and without substantive debate in either House. The issue had been controversial and divisive, and, whenever raised, it had

produced strong reactions in the past.

Diplomatic Relations With the Papal States

Between 1848 and 1867, the United States had diplomatic relations with the papal states. For much of this time, the pope was the sovereign of a bona fide state that controlled central Italy and enjoyed a population of over three million, with Rome as the capital. The U.S. Presidents and secretaries of state instructed their envoys in Rome (Italy had not been unified as yet, and the capital was in Florence) to involve themselves only in "civil relations," "extension of commerce," and to protect U.S. citizens traveling in that part of the Italian peninsula controlled by the religiosecular authority of the pope. Relations with the pope as head of the Church of Rome were specifically excluded.

By 1867 the territory of the papal states had been reduced to the city of Rome itself. In 1870, when the troops of King Victor Emmanuel stormed the Eternal City and made it the capital of a unified Italy, the papal states lapsed. Amazingly, just as the Catholic Church reached the lowest point of its political status as a state, it proclaimed the dogma of papal infallibility. Was this only a historical coincidence?

Reasons for Ending Diplomatic Relations

Reasons given in the 1867 House debate for closing the United States legation in Rome included: (1) papal intolerance—Protestant worship in Rome was prohibited and subject to the Inquisition even in private homes; (2) declining need—diplomatic relations with a state that was in the process of being swallowed up by the kingdom of Italy would serve little useful purpose; (3) the "ornamental" nature of the post—it was not advantaging the American people; (4) cost—the legation seemed to be a useless expense; (5) the constitutional issue—a possible violation of church and state, especially with the almost complete elimination of the pope's temporal power. The result of the debate in the House of Representatives was an overwhelming vote (82 to 18) in favor of closing the legation in Rome. A few years later, the United States reopened a

legation in Rome, but this time, of course, it was accredited to the kingdom of Italy.

Vatican City

For some sixty years subsequent, the pope could not claim to be the ruler of a state. In 1929 an effort was made to heal the deadly wound inflicted upon the aspirations of the papacy to be a state. The present minuscule Vatican City (one-sixth of a square mile) was created by the Lateran Treaty with the Italian Government of Dictator Benito Mussolini. The latter gave the pope sovereignty over the 108 acres surrounding St. Peter's and the papal palace, in order to solve the strained relations with the papacy that dated back to the Italian Risorgimento and unification, and to gain at least a modicum of support for his regime.

Vatican City is thus an artificial state. It is exclusively the headquarters of a church—the Roman Catholic Church. It is basically a church center, run by clerics, with some formal aspects of a state (stamps, currency, ornamental Swiss guards, diplomatic service, international finance) to give the religious hub of Catholicism independence from Italian state control and more international political influence.

There is no doubt that in the past anti-Catholicism was a motivating element in the opposition to U.S.-Vatican diplomatic relations. The fear of Roman Catholic intolerance (religious persecution in some Roman Catholic nations) and concern for American civil liberties were related factors. Today, with the growth of ecumenism and more benign interchurch relations, with the official affirmation of civil religious liberty by the Roman Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council (1965), and with the activities of the current pope in the promotion of peace and human rights, things have changed. The atmosphere differs markedly from 1952 when President Truman tried unsuccessfully to appoint General Mark Clark as ambassador to the Holy See.

Nationwide Opposition

Nevertheless, in 1983-84 there was nationwide opposition

in the United States to diplomatic relations with the Holy See. The groups or individuals who spoke most clearly in opposition represented a broad spectrum: the National Council of Churches, National Association of Evangelicals, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the Moral Majority, and Americans United for Separation of Church and State. There was also some Jewish opposition, but this voice was somewhat muted: The Holy See has not recognized the State of Israel, and it is felt that Jewish opposition to U.S. diplomatic recognition of the Holy See would militate against Vatican diplomatic recognition of Israel.

By no means are all Roman Catholics enthusiastic about U.S.-Vatican ties. Some foresee constitutional problems, negative fallout on interchurch relations, the lack of practical need, the trouble that Vatican interference in U.S. affairs of state could cause, and the increased potential for U.S. government intrusion in Catholic Church affairs. Members of the Catholic hierarchy have been circumspect regarding the matter of diplomatic relations. Some are not anxious to have a papal nuncio in Washington, for he can speak for the pope and the Roman Catholic Church and enjoys direct access to the government without the necessity of mediation by the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The general rationale for opposition is five-fold:

1. *Separation of Church and State.* Diplomatic ties with the Holy See run counter to the fundamental American tradition and concept of separation of church and state. It is a "question of establishment of religion." One test of the constitutionality of a law is whether it entangles the government with the affairs of a church. Not only will diplomatic relations with the Holy See sooner or later and inevitably entangle the U.S. with the problems, views, claims, and aims of a church, but it will also involve that church in the political affairs of the United States and its government. The papal ambassadors (*nuncios*) have been and are strongly involved in the internal and external political affairs of varying countries (e.g., in South America).

2. *A Form of Religious Discrimination.* Having diplomatic

relations with the Holy See is discriminatory. It represents a violation of the American principle of pluralism and the equality of all religions and churches before the law and government. The diplomatic tie in question shows special favor for one church simply because of its size and influence, and because, historically, that church has claimed to possess civil authority. The U.S. Supreme Court (e.g., in *Everson vs. Board of Education* or *McCullum vs. Board of Education*) has made clear that government cannot pass laws that aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over others.

Granting the Holy See, and therefore the Roman Catholic Church, special recognition and direct access to the State Department and the White House is discrimination toward other churches, especially world churches or world ecclesiastical councils. It is a valued American principle of government to treat all churches and religions on an equal footing, no matter what their size and power.

3. *Pope and Curia Comprise Holy See.* It is unrealistic, and in practice impossible, to differentiate between the pope as head of the Roman Catholic Church and as head of the Vatican City State. In fact, diplomatic relations are *not* with the Vatican or Vatican City but with the *Holy See*. The Vatican is simply the official residence of the pope and nucleus of Vatican City. The pope and curia (central administrative staff of the Roman Catholic Church, the departments of which are headed by various cardinals) together comprise the Holy See. The Holy See is used synonymously with "Apostolic See," "Roman Church," and "Roman Curia," not with Vatican City. The Holy See has thus come to designate either the central government of the Roman Catholic Church or the authority itself behind that government (supreme pontiff) or the community governed (Church of Rome); it is not Vatican City as such.

An ambassador to the Holy See is, in essence, an ambassador to the head and government of the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, the juridical status of the Holy See in no way depends on the territorial base of Vatican City. Any interpretation making a separation between the Holy See and the Roman Catholic Church is misleading. The Roman Catholic Church it-

self makes this clear by the dual role assigned to *nuncios* as ambassadors to the government and as papal representatives to the Catholic bishops of the same country.

Today, advocates of U.S. diplomatic relations with the Holy See want these relations specifically with the pope, precisely *because* he is head of the worldwide Roman Catholic Church. Relations with the tiny Vatican enclave in Rome, as such, with a total population of less than 1,000 people, would be of little meaning. An ambassador to the Holy See is not and cannot be an envoy simply to the ruler of Vatican City. It is the religious authority of the pope over hundreds of millions of Catholics that prompts the call for diplomatic relations. It is the religious force of the Roman Catholic Church permeating international life that is in play. In the briefest of discussions in the Senate on September 22, 1983, Senator Dan Quayle, now vice-president, advocated recognition of the Vatican as a "world state." This obviously means the Roman Catholic Church, the only entity through which the Vatican has world significance.

A well-known Roman Catholic historian wrote toward the close of Vatican II: "If there were to be an American ambassador to the Vatican, he would have to be ambassador to the Pope as Pope. This would not demand United States recognition of all the Papal claims implied in the titles 'Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor to the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church,' but, to speak realistically, it would mean that the United States acknowledged the fact that such claims were made, and that a reality existed to substantiate them, and that the importance of that reality, the spiritual authority of the Pope, was such that it warranted establishment of diplomatic relations" (James J. Hennessey, S.J., "U.S. Representative at the Vatican?" *America*, December 4, 1965, p. 708).

4. *Official Diplomatic Relations Unnecessary.* The appointment of a U.S. ambassador to the Holy See is unnecessary. It provides little, if any, additional value to the United States.

Much is made by some of the importance of the Vatican as a listening post. However, the president already had a per-

sonal envoy. Besides, there is a heavily staffed U.S. embassy in Rome, where the personnel of the embassy to the Holy See has to live anyhow. It is not convincing to suggest that the Vatican was holding back information from the personal envoy of the president simply because that envoy lacked the protocol status of ambassador. Such status no doubt helps the U.S. envoy to "sit higher" at Vatican ceremonial functions (of which there are many and mostly of a religious nature), but it could hardly provide additional intelligence or value. Furthermore, any information provided by the Vatican would naturally and quite properly be refracted through Catholic aims, needs, and desires. The goals of Roman Catholic diplomacy, with the pope espousing a world leadership role as Vicar of Christ, are obviously not the same as those of the religiously neutral, though not antireligious, government of the United States.

5. *Possible Damage to Interchurch Relations.* The sending of a U.S. ambassador to the Holy See is not conducive to good interchurch relations. In recent years, especially since Vatican II, relations between Protestants and Catholics in the United States have reflected much less of the past acrimony. The appointment of an ambassador to the headquarters of the Church of Rome and the arrival of a papal pronuncio in Washington raise certain legitimate questions regarding the future.

Concern regarding U.S. diplomatic recognition of the Holy See must not be based on anti-Catholic bigotry. No one can deny the current pope's efforts to promote peace and his speeches supporting human rights. The pope's status as a significant international religious figure is not the problem. The basic issue is the conflict between the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and a law establishing diplomatic relations with a *church*.

CHAPTER

Ten

Can a University Be Christian and Free?

Those who claim that a university cannot be Christian say that the Christian “university” is too committed to religion to offer a truly scientific, liberal education. The Christian scholar in his search for truth wears blinders; he is not free. Therefore, “university” and “Christian” are contradictory terms, and a Christian university or college lacks freedom of scholarly inquiry. Some would even say it lacks religious liberty.

John Dewey, perhaps the leading philosophical influence in U.S. education during the first half of this century, claimed that faith in a personal God and His authority, in fixed revelation, dogma, and doctrine is unacceptable intellectually for the cultivated mind of the Western world. Therefore, Christian belief in the supernatural is becoming more than dubious. It involves both restrictive pessimism and exaggerated optimism regarding human nature. (See Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 38-47.)

There is little doubt that many secularists believe that Christianity is fiction and superstition or obscurantism and that it therefore contradicts science. Furthermore, they feel

that religion should not be a university subject, because the truths of religion are generally not reached through inductive reasoning. But more than that, they would say that any general Christian commitment or orientation of university has a chilling, not to say distorting, effect on scholarship. There seems here almost a contradiction between religious liberty and academic liberty. They conveniently forget that Protestantism largely made possible the scientific movement (see Arnold Nash, *The University and the Modern World*, pp. 62-78).

Purpose of the University

Benjamin Disraeli, Queen Victoria's favorite prime minister, once said that a university should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning. The *Christian* university must be such a place, for Christ is the universal light, the truth shall make men free, and the fear of God is the beginning of learning. The purpose of a university, as I understand it, is to:

1. transmit knowledge and values to the next generation;
2. critically and freely examine existing knowledge and plow new ground;
3. offer professional career preparation;
4. prepare students for life by making man whole, not provincial and fragmented; and
5. offer expert extended service to the community at large.

In my view, the Christian university does all this and more. It must be a center shedding light, upholding liberty, and expanding and disseminating learning.

Question of Presuppositions and Objectivity

The opponents of the Christian university affirm that higher education with a religious perspective lacks objectivity. We must ask ourselves, can there be objectivity in the search for knowledge within the framework of specific Christian orientation and commitment? I would answer: complete objectivity, no, for it does not exist, either in the Christian university, or in the secular university. Albert Einstein once said: "Everybody has certain ideals which determine the direction of his endeavors and his judgment." Arthur Holmes states the

matter most lucidly: "If intellectual objectivity is presuppositionless thinking or learning without guiding purposes, then it exists nowhere. Neutrality on matters of belief and value is humanly impossible. Objectivity consists rather in acknowledging and scrutinizing one's point of view and testing presuppositions. It is more a matter of honesty than neutrality. Every scholar has commitments" (Arthur Holmes, *The Christian College*, p. 71).

Every scholar pursues his study and research within a certain world view. Scholarly inquiry takes place on the basis of certain presuppositions. In fact, assumptions and hypotheses are intertwined with research. However, conducting all research and study simply on the basis of naturalistic presuppositions limits attaining universal knowledge. This is a partial approach, both incomplete and biased.

It seems fair to state that one of the deceptive presuppositions attributed to secular university education is that it has no presuppositions. The secular university, far from being objectively neutral, starts from several presuppositions. I call its approach the "Four Self-Movement": (1) Nature is self-originating; (2) History is self-operating; (3) Man is self-sustaining; and (4) Nature is self-explaining (it has order and constancy). As can be readily seen, there is little room at a secular university for the supernatural.

The scientific method and spirit may be a guide to knowledge, but they provide little, if any, meaning to life and human history. The secular search for impartiality involves neutrality vis-a-vis values ("value-neutral education"). We are told that facts are value-free. Actually, this is a mirage. The language we use is loaded and so is the selection of material used and taught. There are attitudes of mind; there are moral convictions. In theory, the American secular university supposedly does not attempt to "teach any one conception of the world but in practice it teaches a fragmented view of life" (Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 57). It concentrates on the trees of knowledge, instead of the forest. Arnold Nash calls this "an intellectualized version of . . . polytheism" (*op. cit.*, p. 258).

Christian Presuppositions

Of course, the Christian university has presuppositions. We acknowledge them. Here are some of the most important:

1. God is the source of truth.
2. "The Holy Scriptures are the perfect standard of truth" (*Education*, p. 17). They are not all the truth, nor the only truth. They should "be given the highest place in education" (*Education*, p. 17). Not *the only* place, but "the highest."
3. There is coherent unity of truth, with a common focus in Jesus Christ.
4. Truth is found in revelation and disciplined, intellectual inquiry, observation, and study.
5. "*Both man and the world of nature are best understood as creatures of the Divine Mind who is accurately revealed in Jesus Christ*" (Elton Trueblood, *The Idea of a College*, p. 24).

Authentic Christian faith does not limit knowledge, neither is it a source of academic knowledge. Holmes is right in saying that faith is an "attitude of openness" in response to God's loving self-revelation. It does not preclude thinking about what we think we know and about what we do not know. It is really a sort of spiritual passkey that opens doors, rather than shuts them. Faith supports the search for truth and the examination of evidence. In this sense "faith liberates rather than enslaves the mind" (Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 63). Elton Trueblood believes, therefore, that an individual who is a Christian will be potentially a better scholar than if he were a non-Christian. Christianity, at its authentic best, is the "sworn enemy of all intellectual dishonesty and shoddiness" (Trueblood, *op. cit.*, p. 19). Ellen G. White contends that Christian education should produce powerful thinkers, strong-minded masters of destiny, and action-oriented individuals: "It is the work of true education to develop [the power to think and do], to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts" (*Education*, p. 17). Authentic Christian institutions of learning are to "send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions" (*Education*, p. 18).

Historical Christian Links

The question, "Can a university be Christian?" would, a century or two ago, have been considered the wrong question. People would have been more likely to ask, "Is this university Christian?" or "Can a true university be non-Christian?" Most universities had Christian links (sometimes bridles!) and origins. The universities of modern times stand in a direct line with the Roman imperial schools, but they developed from the European universities of the Middle Ages. As institutions, their machinery and terminology are of Christian origin and traceable to the activities of clergy during those centuries past. C. H. Haskins said that our universities, like cathedrals and parliaments, "are the heirs, not of Athens and Alexandria, but of Paris and Bologna."

University comes from the Latin word *universitas*, "the whole." The clear meaning here is that universities are to deal with universal, general knowledge. Properly speaking, a university should cover a broad spectrum of fields of knowledge, including graduate work. However, in practice, few universities teach all branches of human knowledge, as the word *universitas* implies.

The European universities, beginning with the twelfth century, developed from the cathedral and monastery schools. The first institution in Europe to fully merit the name university was the University of Paris (Sorbonne), the mother of northern universities, and my alma mater. It was manifestly ecclesiastical in its origin (the Sorbonne, originally an endowed house for poor theology students, is named after churchman Robert de Sorbon).

No other university has had the prestige the University of Paris had during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This institution of learning took the lead in ending the "Great Schism" of the Catholic Church and starting the Conciliar Movement. There was a saying: The Italians have the pope, the Germans the emperor, the French have learning. The university started under the control of the bishop but after a struggle became an autonomous body. Most university students outside Italy had taken the tonsure and were classified

as ecclesiastics, subject to church, rather than secular courts. However, the universities were always trying to free themselves from the control of both the state and the church (town and gown conflicts!). Theology was the longest course. In Paris it took thirteen to fourteen years for the doctorate in theology.

I mention all this to show the close original link between Christianity and the universities. In America, higher education was born in the crucible of the Christian religion and was nurtured in the cradle of Christian churches. Higher education began with an eye to the propagation of religion, morality, and learning—certainly all interrelated. The training of ministers was an early objective. Harvard started as a Christian college of theology—a sort of seminary. It then moved toward liberal arts. Other institutions felt the same need for education to go beyond the more narrow needs of the churches. An important response was the state universities. Gradually, professional and research interests have come to dominate all other aspects of advanced education.

The Christian roots of the American university are clear, though in many instances they have been cut off. Perhaps taking its cue from Oxford University's motto, "Domino Illuminatio Mea," Harvard's motto on its seal is "Christo et Ecclesiae" (for Christ and Church) surrounding the word "veritas" (truth). Today, this is only an echo from a distant past, though the president of Harvard, Derek Bok, has advocated a commitment to ethical standards and behavior on American campuses.

Christian University and Academic Freedom

There seems little doubt that academic freedom is one of the litmus tests of being an American or Western democratic university. Academic freedom is part of the debate regarding the nature of the university, especially when church controlled or affiliated. Russell Kirk, in his work on academic freedom, quotes the British divine Dean Inge as saying that "true freedom survives 'only in the shadow-world of the intellectuals'" (Russell Kirk, *Academic Freedom*, p. 28).

Since 1870, the American concept of academic freedom has

been considerably influenced by the German universities and the two similar German words: *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*—the first referring to the freedom of the teachers to teach and the second to the freedom of the students to learn. Indeed, academic freedom is a two-edged sword.

Academic freedom safeguards methods to explore the unknown, to press back the frontiers of knowledge, and test the accepted. The professor has an obligation to search for truth, and academic freedom protects him in this quest (or at least is supposed to). He is invested with the dignity of a high profession. Equally, the student's freedom as a scholar seeking knowledge is to be respected.

Theologically, we need academic freedom because human beings are free moral agents. This is based on Acts 4:19, 20. It is necessary for self-scrutiny, improvement, revival, and reformation. Freedom of conscience is part of the Reformation heritage, though it has often been abused and ignored. To deny academic freedom is to commit intellectual suicide. Such a denial will normally not strengthen orthodoxy but, on the contrary, make it rather suspect to onlookers and the inquiring student.

In 1940 the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) produced a classic statement regarding academic freedom that balances freedom with responsibility. The university teacher should realize that "his special position in the community imposes special obligations." He needs to "exercise appropriate restraint." "Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institutions should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment." Christian universities and colleges have quoted these words often and approvingly. It is at times overlooked, however, that in 1969 the AAUP issued an interpretive statement indicating that "most church-related institutions no longer need or desire the departure from the principle of academic freedom implied in the 1940 statement, and we do not now endorse such a departure."

The reason why many church-related universities and colleges feel they no longer need this religious safeguard is that

they have moved down the road into the mainstream of secular higher education. The late Lebanese scholar and statesman, Charles H. Malik, has called this the "swerving" of universities away from their original intention (*A Christian Critique of the University*, p. 30). Furthermore, these institutions wish to demonstrate their eligibility for federal and state funding, which requires eligible institutions not to be "narrowly sectarian."

Example of S.D.A. Church

The Seventh-day Adventist Church probably operates the largest and most widespread international Protestant school system in the world. In October 1984, the Annual Council of the church upheld as "guidelines" the concept of academic freedom in Seventh-day Adventist higher education. In 1987, this statement became a "position paper" of the General Conference. (See the *1987 Annual Council General Actions*, pp. 17-19.) The church acknowledges the centrality of academic freedom, defined as "freedom to pursue knowledge and truth" in a professor's area of professional expertise.

Academic freedom is recognized as being "essential to the well-being of the church itself," "since the dynamic development of the church depends on continuing study of dedicated scholars" in an atmosphere of "Christian cordiality" without feeling "threatened" when their "findings differ from traditional views." As was the case with the 1940 AAUP statement, the church's statement balances freedom with responsibility. The S.D.A. professor has a triple responsibility: (1) responsibility as a self-disciplined scholar without restraints, (2) responsible regard for the character and aims of the institution where he teaches, and (3) concern for the spiritual and intellectual needs of the students (p. 17).

The statement then goes on to affirm: "Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities, therefore, subscribe to principles of academic freedom generally held important in higher education. . . . Freedoms are never absolute and . . . imply commensurate responsibilities" (p. 17).

The statement underlines the importance of collegiality—

counseling together with peers and administrators. The statement also makes it clear that it is the duty of president, board of trustees, and general church leaders to "protect the scholar" (p. 18). This is a most important positive concept.

There is one clear limitation to academic freedom: Teachers are expected not to teach as truth what is contrary to the 27 *Fundamental Beliefs* of the church. This is really the bottom line. It would seem that this is a necessary limitation of the university professor in his otherwise unlimited responsible exploration of universal knowledge. After all, the university also has freedom. Each institution is to establish clear procedures to deal with grievances regarding academic freedom.

Freedom of Students

Earlier, mention was made of the rights of the students as part of academic freedom. There is the problem of immature students at a university or college. Some, unfortunately, have been raised on credulity. They have never been taught to think. Their view of the Christian faith may be somewhat primitive. They have never been exposed, or very minimally so, to other ideas. Questions are raised in or outside of class, and they become troubled and confused. Teachers in their classes need to "deal gently" with these intellectual Absaloms. Academic freedom is not a license to shock the simple or naive or to shackle the arrogant challengers or to shatter the opposition or to shame the ignorant, but to shower pearls of balanced information, truth, and wisdom on both the strong and weak students. Good pedagogy "takes into account the nature of the receiver" (Alice Gallin, "Academic Freedom and the Catholic College/University," in *Current Issues in Catholic Higher Education*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1987, p. 32). Yes, freedom is never unlimited and is correlative with duties. Even those weak in faith and knowledge have the right to have their religious liberty respected.

Does Christian commitment restrict intellectual endeavor and freedom? It can, but it should not and need not. Rather, it should inspire searching for truth and learning; it should liberate and enlarge horizons and expose new and exciting ex-

panses of inquiry. Academic freedom is a fragile gift—as we saw during the McCarthy era of the 1950's. Let both church and university uphold this precious gift. Aggressive secularism is a menace to academic freedom (as the very question, "Can a university be Christian?" warns). Russell Kirk may be right when he claims: "Educational institutions influenced strongly by religious dogmas often are most friendly to originality of thought and most mindful of the dignity of the scholar" (Kirk, *op. cit.*, p. 41). This should be true in the Christian university.

Integration of Learning and Faith

The Christian university in America is really the linear descendant of the medieval university, where the life and thought of the academic community were interpenetrated, informed, and challenged by religion and theology. This is still the case of Christian universities, which are strongly linked to and supported by churches. (Actually, most Catholic colleges in the U.S. are not controlled by or financially supported by the institutional Catholic Church.)

A Christian university must stand for: (1) divine creation, (2) revelation, (3) reason, (4) human rights, including religious liberty, because man was created in God's image, (5) essence, not just existence, and (6) a unified world view and moral order. For its teaching and research, it must use the systems of evidence espoused by education and science in search of truth. It must work for integration of learning and faith.

How often is integration of faith and learning actually achieved? This is a great goal and ideal, never fully reached. Like Paul, the faculty of a Christian university needs to be able to say: We count ourselves not to have apprehended, but we press toward the mark of the high university calling.

Pitfalls of the Christian University

There are several pitfalls the Christian university should endeavor to avoid.

1. There is the danger of simple indoctrination, instead of education. It is not the task of a Christian university to blind-

fold students to what civilization and culture can offer but rather to open their eyes to reality and liberate them from the cocoon of introverted nonreality.

2. There is the defensive mentality, offering ready-made answers to prepackaged sets of questions. All this leads to a ghetto or fortress mentality, keeping the student "twenty miles from sin." However, do we not all know that sin and heresy come from the mind, rather than geography (though the latter can have a facilitating role to play)?

3. There is also the polemical or negative attitude toward scholarly learning, science, the arts, and culture (what the Germans call "Kulturpessimismus").

4. Aiming at the conjunction of Christianity and learning, rather than working toward integration.

5. There is the danger of viewing *thinking* as an "impious spectator sport" (as Arthur Holmes puts it). Logical vigor and self-critical honesty are needed.

In meeting current problems faced by the Christian university, there are at least three possible paths to follow:

(1) Accept the growing secularization process and join the long procession of colleges and universities that have given up their authentic Christian vocation and Christian points of reference, becoming like state universities and colleges but with much higher tuition. Their Christian future lies in the past.

(2) Close in on self. Pull up the intellectual drawbridges, opt out of society, like the Amish, and disappear into the safety of the fortress to train church workers—being little more than Bible colleges (which are at times hardly *colleges* and where they seem to "love" the Bible without always really understanding it).

(3) Pursue excellence in all branches of learning, keeping them closely connected to the roots of ultimate reality in a personal Creator and soon-coming God.

Need for Holistic Approach

The secular university seeks to compartmentalize religion and thus fragments life. Quite often, quasi-religions or ideologies like humanism, Marxism, or existentialism, are substi-

tuted for Christianity. Compartmentalization and fragmentation go against the nature of the *universities*. Faith and learning go together because man is essentially a religious being. Only the holistic approach is fully universal. It preserves both freedom and reason. Freedom is a reality only because there is a God. Other philosophies lead usually to heteronomy, the imposed, external rule of the strong over the weak; religious liberty is then in jeopardy.

John Henry Newman, in his classic, *The Idea of a University*, saw the danger of higher education not related to the church: men grow in knowledge and not in religion, and science is in danger of running "wild, like a planet broken loose from its celestial system" (1959 edition, p. 463). Mutilation of the divine breaks up into fragments the whole circle of secular knowledge, for there is no *universal* knowledge without theology. Cutting religion and traditional morality from the university causes a deadly wound, for the "fountain of learning, and of liberty, is religion" (Kirk, *op. cit.*, p. 31).

Speaking of the scientific approach to learning, Francis Bacon once said: "We need fear no lion in the path nor set any limit to our journey" (quoted in Charles E. Raven, *Natural Religion and Christian Theology*, First Series: "Science and Religion," p. 101). Ellen G. White uses similar language regarding the approach to learning found in Christian education: "Before the student there is opened a path of continual progress. . . . He will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge" (*Education*, p. 18).

The absolute universality of Christianity (which of course must be reflected in the Christian university) is seen in the fact that its scope reaches right into eternity (what Ellen G. White calls the "school of the hereafter"): "There every power will be developed, every capability increased . . . the highest ambitions realized. And still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, . . . more glorious revelations" as the years of eternity roll down the corridors of endless ages (*Education*, p. 307).

Thus, the education offered by the Christian university, if faithful to its origins and mission, is based on Christianity as

“a universal principle of thought with universal implications” (Arnold Nash, *The University and the Modern World*, p. 287), right into eternity.

Writing to the Corinthians about the Christian gospel, Paul, in his first letter, points out that Christianity is not small, stifling, or limited. It is truly a *universitas*: “All things are yours.” Just in case there is a doubt, he repeats again in the next verse: “All are yours.” He speaks of the “world,” of “life” or “death,” “of things present, or things to come” (1 Corinthians 3:21, 22). He could have mentioned “history of infinite scope” (*Education*, p. 304), the treasures of art and music, the beauties of nature, the macrowonders of space, the micromarvels of science, or the love in human relationships. Yes, in the setting of Christianity and the *Christian* university, “all are yours.” But Paul does not stop here. “All things are yours,” but not without a central reference point, not without a framework. Remember, he seems to say, “All are yours, [but] ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s” (1 Corinthians 3:23).

CHAPTER

Eleven

Persecution—Boon or Bane?

Among the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount are the following astonishing words: “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad” (Matthew 5:11, 12, NIV). Jesus was on a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee and speaking directly to His disciples. From His far-reaching perspective, was He advocating persecution and the denial of religious liberty for His followers?

“Do Not Be Like Them”

The Sermon on the Mount is the best-known portion of the teachings of Jesus—and probably the least obeyed. It has been called the Magna Carta of the kingdom, the inaugural address, a religious manifesto. John Stott, in his book, *Christian Counterculture*, indicates that many young people have repudiated the greedy affluence of the West. They oppose and despise the superficiality and sham of both religious conformism and irreligious materialism. The unfortunate result has often been alienation and the search for counterculture outside of Christianity. We may ask the question why? “Because,”

these young people say, "Christians are no different from anybody else." Is this analysis correct? Are Christians just average citizens treading the mill of goods-getting? A key statement of the Sermon on the Mount is: "Do not be like them" (Matthew 6:8, NIV). Thus Christians in actuality should be different because they take their cue, not from the people around them, but from Jesus Christ.

In the Sermon on the Mount, as perceived by Stott, we have a rather challenging picture of what could be called the "Christian counterculture," based on a value system at total variance with the popular worldly lifestyle. This is rather clearly presented in the Beatitudes: the advantage of poverty over wealth, of sorrow over pleasure, and persecution over favorable support. The values of the world are turned upside down.

Did Christ Advocate Persecution?

Christ then goes on to make this astonishing statement: "How blest you are, when you suffer insults and persecution." *Was Christ in favor of persecution? Did He persecute and ask His followers to do likewise? Of course not.* However, historically the church all too often has been ready to persecute those calling themselves Christians or Jews or unbelievers. Religious leaders have praised the saintly martyrs of the past and persecuted living saints. While persecution is an evil thing, it is not so much wrong because it is cruel, but cruel because it is wrong. Christ did not persecute. He used force only once and then it was to drive evil and profiteering merchants *out* of the church, not *into* the church.

Persecution in History

Persecutions started early in Christian history, from Jerusalem to Rome. Historians have numbered ten general persecutions under the Roman empire. Actually, Rome was generally quite broad-minded and tolerant regarding religion. *Why then were Christians persecuted?*

First of all, there was the problem of ignorance. Misinformation is very often a key factor in persecution. Since Chris-

tians did not worship many gods, they were accused of being atheists.

Second, there was the matter of slander, caused by the blind spots of ignorance. Christians were accused of cannibalism (in the communion service they used Christ's words, "This is my body"), of immoral practices during the "agape love feasts," and of incendiarism (Nero accused them of setting Rome on fire).

Third, there were political reasons. Christians were politically suspect because they tended to separate themselves somewhat from public life. They did not participate in certain feasts, such as when a cup of wine was poured out as libation in honor of the gods. Christians were viewed as antisocial. The fact that Christians did not participate in the worship of Caesar—their sovereign ruler—refusing even to offer a pinch of incense, made them appear as politically subversive and ineligible to receive the "libellus," a sort of certificate of good citizenship. When there was a conflict of loyalties, the Christians opted for Christ rather than Caesar, even at the risk of execution. Tradition tells of a Christian who had religious liberty problems at work and wrote to Tertullian asking, "What can I do? I must live." To which the great church father replied: "Must you?"

Reasons Given Today for Persecution

When government is involved in persecution today, the reasons are still the same, but more subtle. Rarely is anyone officially persecuted for religious reasons. Ignorance still plays a causative role. Government authorities are frequently poorly informed. Christians and other believers are accused of brainwashing their children, of beguiling people into giving money, of financial fraud, and of being foreign agents. Believers are denounced as being antisocial, antilabor, social parasites, reactionary fanatics, divisive, and disturbers of public order. They are charged with political subversion, anti-state activities, Western imperialism, and being enemies of the people.

The Positive Fallout of Persecution

Jesus said that His followers are blessed when they suffer insults and persecution. How can He make such an astonish-

ing statement? First of all, because persecution can be a token of genuineness, of religious authenticity. Persecution distinguishes the resolute believer from the jellyfish. The half-hearted and weak-willed person is prone to waver and yield the faith when intolerance holds sway. The make-believe Christian is hardly ready or willing to be a prisoner of conscience. Adversity makes the stalwart child of God, however, stand firmer, and makes "his hope brighter" (*Great Controversy*, p. 602). We can rejoice at the thought that persecution does today what God's judgment will do finally: separate the wheat from the tares.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the now highly regarded Christian theologian and antagonist of the Nazi regime, was executed by order of Heinrich Himmler in April 1945, a few weeks before the arrival of the advancing allied troops. Several years earlier he had written: "Suffering, then, is the badge of the true Christian. . . . It is a joy and a privilege, and a token of His grace" (*The Cost of Discipleship*, pp. 74, 75).

Second, the persecuted person can be considered happy and blessed because he may very well develop deeper piety and purity. Ellen G. White writes about God converting persecution into gain for His people: "All that He brings upon the church in test and trial comes that His people may gain deeper piety and more strength." Furthermore, "He suffers no affliction to come upon the church but such as is essential for her purification" (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 228).

Third, persecution can promote both the unity of the church and the restoration of backsliders. It can thus have internal benefits. Mutual sufferings endured can bring people nearer to one another (see *Great Controversy*, p. 42), and those who have strayed from the fold can be motivated to return.

Finally, the scattering effect of persecution, imprisonment, and exile has historically contributed to the spread of religious truth. Jesus Himself, in speaking of the signs of the end and of His coming, indicated that persecution would result in rulers receiving the Christian witness (see Luke 21:12, 13). Paul's imprisonment in Rome caused the Christian gospel to reach right into the imperial palace. Puritan Christianity

came to Massachusetts in the early seventeenth century, and Adventism reached Siberia in the late nineteenth century because of persecution. These are just a few examples of the "diaspora effect."

Persecution Intrinsically Evil

All this does not mean that persecution should either be condoned or encouraged, because, as we shall see, it is intrinsically evil. Furthermore, a laissez-faire attitude is unacceptable. Preventive measures need to be adopted. "We are not to sit in calm expectancy of oppression and tribulation, and fold our hands, doing nothing to avert the evil" (*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 370).

On the other hand, work in favor of religious liberty does not mean that one should be aggressive, on the attack, and endeavoring to cut to pieces the real or potential opposition. Retaliation and waspish defiance are not Christian virtues. Ellen G. White has some good words of advice: "Let none act rashly. Learn as never before that you must be meek and lowly in heart. . . . Sharp things must sometimes be spoken; but be sure that the Holy Spirit of God is abiding in your heart before you speak the clear-cut truth; then let it cut its way. *You are not to do the cutting*" (*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 370, 371).

Inviting Persecution

Some people, suffering perhaps from masochistic tendencies or a persecution complex, encourage persecution and expose themselves unnecessarily. God does not wish His children to invite persecution; Christ did not. He did not rush into danger and stir up a crisis. Some individuals or organizations create imaginary burdens for themselves and borrow possible future trouble. I have heard rumors about a computer in Bruxelles to be used for oppressive control of people with religious convictions. I have received letters regarding the new equivalent of an "apocalyptic sign" on the hand necessary for cashing social security checks. Others have inquired about the decision of the United States Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to ban all religious broadcasting. Some have

written regarding the national Sunday law bill ready to be passed by Congress. These are all false rumors based on no current reality. There are other similar flights of fancy into a futuristic dreamland. Jesus warned against unhealthy worry and said "each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34, NIV) without transplanting into the present the real eschatological problems of the future.

Opposing Persecution

Every human being, because of the very nature of his humanity, should oppose intolerance, persecution, and slander. They are intrinsically evil. Shakespeare uses very graphic language to characterize "slander, /Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue/ Outvenoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath/ Rides on the posting winds and doth belie/ All corners of the world" (*Cymbeline*, III, iv, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, p. 1539). The person reviled and maltreated is not "blest and happy" because of the abuse, but because "in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28).

We must oppose persecution for the sake of the truth and for the sake of evangelism. The truth does not persecute, but on the contrary, it makes free. It is pseudo-truth that persecutes and enslaves.

The Persecutor

Finally, we must confront and resist religious oppression for the sake of the persecutors. Persecution and religious slander are double vices: they wound not only the person against whom they are directed, but even more so he who commits them. The persecutor degrades and ultimately destroys himself.

In his opus magnum, *The Gulag Archipelago*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn characterizes the interrogators-persecutors as individuals who give a "firm impression of low, malicious, impious, and, possibly, muddled people," sub-humans "stripped bare of universal human ideals," and possessed with greed for power and greed for gain (I, pp. 144, 145, 147). They tend to be

intoxicated with the desire to control others, they are devoid of feelings of mercy, and place loyalty to the organizational machinery on a high pedestal. All this is held together by an overarching fear for their own future (pp. 148, 149, 155).

Promise of Reward

The promise of the Beatitudes is that the reward is great in heaven. There is here a clear eschatological dimension. However, the blessing of happiness lies not only in the future. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, for some time a prisoner in the forbidding Butyski prison cells, says: "I was happy! . . . I was absolutely happy" (*Gulag*, I, p. 601). God's kingdom has a present reality of blessedness, but a full and mighty stream is yet to flow. The message of the gospel is that every child of God, no matter what the trials, is blessed *now*. In addition there is the anticipation of a much more blessed flood of happiness to come.

Actually, the English word *happiness* is etymologically a weaker word than the Greek term *makarios* used in the Beatitudes. *Happiness* contains the root *hap*, that is, chance. There is here the random element of fortune and luck. The happiness Jesus spoke about on the mount overlooking the beautiful lake below is not like the haphazard winning of the state lottery. On the contrary, it is permanent, sure, and enduring. "Your joy, no man taketh from you" (John 16:22).

Lighting a Candle

The task of every Christian is to shed the gospel light of religious liberty. In fact, right after saying blessed are you when you suffer insults and persecution, Jesus announces, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Nero wrapped Christians in pitch and used them on occasion as living torches to light his palace gardens. Unwittingly, he gave a literal representation to a symbolic truth. Jesus is really saying you are blessed when persecuted because as you bear witness to the truth under pressure you become the light of the world. God wants His witnesses to be candles of gospel light.

Among the famous words spoken by dying men, perhaps

few are so vividly remembered as those uttered by Hugh Latimer at Oxford, October 16, 1555. Latimer and Nicholas Ridley stand back to back at a common stake, a chain about their waists. As the flames leap up, Latimer's voice rings out, "Be of good comfort, master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out" (quoted in Harold S. Darby, *Hugh Latimer*, p. 247).

That candle burns on today, and we can still find inspirational light from the candles Latimer lit over four centuries ago:

The candle of devotion to the Scriptures, by which every belief and practice is tested.

The candle of undaunted uprightness, standing for the right "though the heavens fall," fending for justice when the majority has forsaken righteousness and "champions are few."

The candle of fearlessness in speaking out against oppression of the poor, the evils of the day, wherever found, including within the establishment.

The candle of an exemplary personal life, about which the sternest critics can find little to censure.

The candle of courage in standing for the truth, at whatever cost, be it opposition, imprisonment, or death.

These candles still burn. These lights still shine.